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THE DIVINE COMEDY
OF DANTE ALIGHIERI

PARADISO

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

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THE DIVINE COMEDY OF DANTE ALIGHIERI

The Italian text with a
translation in English
terza-rima verse by
MELVILLE B. ANDERSON



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DANTE ALIGHIERI

Born at Florence sometime between mid-May and mid-June,
1265.

Died at Ravenna

14 September 1321

Earliest known manuscript of the poem

1336

First printed texts (three in number)

1472

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CONTENTS

CANTO

I. <i>Ascent of Dante with Beatrice</i>	3
II. <i>Heaven of the Moon</i>	13
III. <i>Spirits of Women in the Lunar Heaven</i>	23
IV. <i>Solution of Perplexing Questions</i>	33
V. <i>Vows and Free Will; Ascent to the Heaven of Mercury</i>	43
VI. <i>The Function of Rome in Human Redemption</i>	53
VII. <i>Mystery of the Redemption</i>	65
VIII. <i>The Heaven of Venus</i>	75
IX. <i>A Great Lady and a Poet prophesy</i>	85
X. <i>Heaven of the Sun: Starry Garland of Sages</i>	97
XI. <i>St. Thomas Aquinas in praise of St. Francis</i>	107
XII. <i>St. Bonaventura in praise of St. Dominic</i>	117
XIII. <i>Discourse of the Angelic Doctor set to Celestial Music</i>	127
XIV. <i>The Spiritual Body. Galaxy of the Cross in Mars</i>	137
XV. <i>Cacciaguida recalls the Heroic Age of Florence</i>	147
XVI. <i>Concerning forty worthy families of Florence</i>	157
XVII. <i>Dante's Exile and Justification</i>	167
XVIII. <i>The Mystic Symbol of Justice in the Temperate Star of Love</i>	177
XIX. <i>The Symbolic Eagle discourses of Divine Justice</i>	187
XX. <i>The Eagle continues to Discourse</i>	197
XXI. <i>Heaven of Saturn</i>	207
XXII. <i>St. Benedict; Dante's Natal Constellation</i>	217
XXIII. <i>Vision of the Host of the Redeemed</i>	227
XXIV. <i>St. Peter examines Him concerning Faith</i>	237
XXV. <i>St. James examines Him concerning Hope</i>	247
XXVI. <i>St. John examines Him concerning Love</i>	257
XXVII. <i>Ascent to the Crystalline Heaven</i>	267

xxviii.	<i>The Heavenly Intelligences</i>	. . .	277
xxix.	<i>Creation and Nature of Heavenly Intelligence</i>	. . .	287
xxx.	<i>The Celestial Rose</i>		297
xxxI.	<i>Beatrice sends St. Bernard to Dante</i>		307
xxxII.	<i>Order of Places in the Mystic Amphitheatre</i>		317
xxxIII.	<i>The Ultimate Vision</i>		327

PARADISO

'E 'n la sua volontate è nostra pace'

Paradiso iii. 85

CANTO PRIMO

- 1 La gloria di colui che tutto move
per l' universo penetra, e risplende
in una parte più, e meno altrove.
- 4 Nel ciel che più della sua luce prende
fu' io, e vidi cose che ridire
nè sa, nè può chi di lassù discende;
- 7 Perchè, appressando sè al suo disire,
nostro intelletto si profonda tanto,
che retro la memoria non può ire.
- 10 Veramente quant' io del regno santo
nella mia mente potei far tesoro,
sarà ora materia del mio canto.
- 13 O buono Apollo, all' ultimo lavoro
fammi del tuo valor sì fatto vaso,
come domandi a dar l' amato alloro.
- 16 Infino a qui l' un giogo di Parnaso
assai mi fu, ma or con ambedue
m' è uopo entrar nell' aringo rimaso.
- 19 Entra nel petto mio, e spira tue
sì come quando Marsia traesti
della vagina delle membra sue.
- 22 O divina virtù, se mi ti presti
tanto che l' ombra del beato regno
segnata nel mio capo io manifesti,
- 25 Venir vedra' mi al tuo diletto legno,
e coronarmi allor di quelle foglie
che la materia e tu mi farai degno.
- 28 Sì rade volte, padre, se ne coglie,
per trionfare o Cesare o Poeta,
(colpa e vergogna delle umane voglie)
- 31 Che partorir letizia in sulla lieta
Delfica deità dovria la fronda
Peneia, quando alcun di sè asseta.
- 34 Poca favilla gran fiamma seconda:
forse retro da me con miglior voci
si pregherà perchè Cirra risponda.

CANTO I

Ascent of Dante with Beatrice

- 1 The glory of Him who moves the universe
doth penetrate the whole, and shine intense
in different regions in degrees diverse.
- 4 That Heaven partaking most His effluence
I entered into, things therein discerning
none knows, nor can report, descending thence;
- 7 Because in drawing near to its own yearning
the intellect is gulfed in such a sea
that for the memory is no returning.
- 10 Yet whatsoever in my memory
I could entreature of the Kingdom blest
henceforth the matter of my song shall be.
- 13 O good Apollo, for the final quest
make me such vessel of thy worth as thou
for the loved laurel-gift requirest!
- 16 One summit of Parnassus until now
sufficed me, but henceforth the twain beneath
into the last arena must I go.
- 19 Into my bosom enter thou, and breathe
as when thou didst pluck Marsyas amain
and from the scabbard of his limbs unsheathe!
- 22 Virtue Divine! if thou wilt lend me a strain
to manifest the blessed realm above,
whose shadowy signature is in my brain,
- 25 Shalt see me pluck the laurel of thy love
and crown me with those leaves, which this my
matter and thou shalt make me worthy of. [higher
- 28 So seldom do we gather of them, Sire,
for Poet's triumph or for Emperor
(the fault and shame that spring from man's desire),
- 31 That the Peneian frond should breed the more
joy in the joyous Delphic deity
when it makes any one athirst therefor.
- 34 From tiny spark flame follows hot and high:
after me better voices shall perchance
lift up such prayer that Cyrrha may reply.

- 37 Surge ai mortali per diverse foci
la lucerna del mondo; ma da quella
che quattro cerchi giunge con tre croci,
40 Con miglior corso e con migliore stella
esce congiunta, e la mondana cera
più a suo modo tempera e suggella.
43 Fatto avea di là mane e di qua sera
tal foce quasi; e tutto era là bianco
quello emisperio, e l'altra parte nera,
46 Quando Beatrice in sul sinistro fianco
vidi rivolta, e riguardar nel sole:
aquila sì non gli s'affisse unquanco.
49 E sì come 'l secondo raggio suole
uscir del primo, e risalire insuso,
pur come peregrin che tornar vuole;
52 Così dell'atto suo, per gli occhi infuso
nell' imagine mia, il mio si fece,
e fissi gli occhi al sole oltre a nostr' uso.
55 Molto è licito là, che qui non lece
alle nostre virtù, mercè del loco
fatto per proprio dell' umana spece.
58 Io nol soffersi molto, nè sì poco,
ch' io nol vedessi sfavillar dintorno,
qual ferro che bogliente esce del foco.
61 E di subito parve giorno a giorno
essere aggiunto, come quei che puote
avesse il ciel d' un altro sole adorno.
64 Beatrice tutta nell' eterne rote
fissa con gli occhi stava, ed io in lei
le luci fissi, di lassù remote;
67 Nel suo aspetto tal dentro mi fei,
qual si fe' Glauco nel gustar dell' erba,
che il fe' consorte in mar degli altri Dei.
70 Trasumanar significar *per verba*
non si poria; però l' esempio basti
a cui esperienza grazia serba.
73 S' io era sol di me quel che creasti
novellamente, Amor che il ciel governi,
tu il sai, che col tuo lume mi levasti.

- 37 Through different entrances to mortal glance
the world's lamp rises, but from out that station
where join three crosses with four circling bands
- 40 With a better course, with a better constellation
it comes conjoined, sealing with stamp more clear
and tempering mundane wax more to its fashion.
- 43 This gate had almost made it evening here
and morning yonder; all was there aglow
while darkness overcast our hemisphere,
- 46 When, turned about toward the left-hand, lo!
Beatrice who was gazing on the sun:
never did eagle fasten on it so.
- 49 And just as ever from the former one
issues a second ray and upward flies,
like pilgrim turning homeward, journey done,
- 52 So did her act, informing through the eyes
mine own imagination, give me grace
to eye the sun beyond our wonted wise.
- 55 Much is permitted yonder, in this place
prohibited our powers, thanks to the spot
fashioned expressly for the human race.
- 58 Not long did I endure this, and yet not
so little but I saw it sparkling nigh,
as iron from the fire pours boiling hot;
- 61 And of a sudden day to day thereby
seemed to be added, as if He who can
had with another sun adorned the sky.
- 64 Fixed where the everlasting circles ran
were the rapt eyes of Beatrice, and mine
withdrawn from heaven were turned her own to
- 67 Gazing at her I grew within divine [scan.
as Glaucus did, tasting the herb, and thence
peer of the other gods beneath the brine.
- 70 No word 'transhumanizing' represents:
the example then to him sufficient be
whom Grace reserves for like experience.
- 73 If I was merely what most recently
Thou madest, Love, who governest the skies,
Thou knowest, who with Thy light upliftedst me.

- 76 Quando la rota, che tu sempiterni
desiderato, a sè mi fece atteso,
con l'armonia che temperi e discerni,
79 Parvemi tanto allor del cielo acceso
dalla fiamma del sol, che pioggia o fiume
lago non fece mai tanto disteso.
82 La novità del suono e il grande lume
di lor cagion m'accesero un disio
mai non sentito di cotanto acume.
85 Ond'ella, che vedea me sì com'io,
a quietarmi l'animo commosso,
pria ch'io a domandar, la bocca aprio,
88 E cominciò: 'Tu stesso ti fai grosso
col falso immaginar, sì che non vedi
ciò che vedresti, se l'avessi scosso.
91 Tu non se' in terra, sì come tu credi;
ma folgore, fuggendo il proprio sito,
non corse come tu ch'ad esso riedi.'
94 S'io fui del primo dubbio disvestito
per le sorrise parolette brevi,
dentro ad un nuovo più fui irretito;
97 E dissi: 'Già contento requievi
di grande ammirazion; ma ora ammiro
com'io trascenda questi corpi lievi.'
100 Ond'ella, appresso d'un pio sospiro,
gli occhi drizzò ver me con quel sembiante
che madre fa sopra figliuol deliro;
103 E cominciò: 'Le cose tutte quante
hann'ordine tra loro; e questo è forma
che l'universo a Dio fa simigliante.
106 Qui veggion l'alte creature l'orma
dell'eterno valore, il quale è fine
al quale è fatta la toccata norma.
109 Nell'ordine ch'io dico sono accline
tutte nature, per diverse sorti,
più al principio loro e men vicine;
112 Onde si movono a diversi porti
per lo gran mar dell'essere, e ciascuna
con istinto a lei dato che la porti.

- 76 Now when the Wheel Thou dost eternalize
by being desired, made me on it intent
by music Thou dost tune and harmonize,
79 So kindled seemed to me the firmament
by the sun's rays, that never rain nor stream
flowed over into a lake of such extent.
82 The newness of the sound and the great gleam
kindled my wish their causes to assign
to poignant longing never so extreme.
85 Whence she who could my question well divine,
the perturbation of my mind to lull,
parted her lips and took the word from mine,
88 Beginning thus: 'How dost thou make thee dull
with false imagination, not perceiving
what thou wouldst see wert thou less fanciful.
91 Thou art not on the earth, though so believing;
but lightning from its proper home ne'er flew
such flight as thou, thy proper home retrieving.'
94 If disentangled from my first doubt through
such little words as these, more smiled than phrased,
the more was I enmeshed within a new;
97 'Already I had ceased to be amazed,'
said I, 'but am again with wonder filled
how through these lightsome bodies I am raised.'
100 Whence Beatrice, with a sigh of pity mild,
bending her eyes upon me with such glance
as a mother casts on her delirious child,
103 Began: 'All things soever have ordinance
among themselves; here is the form displayed
which makes the world like God's own countenance.
106 Herein the exalted creatures see the tread
of the Eternal Worth, which is the goal
whereto the aforesaid rule is fashioned.
109 The ordinance I speak of doth control
all natures, which through fates of different sorts
neighbour, both near and far, their Primal Soul;
112 Wherefore they shape their course to different ports
of the vast sea of being, each with boon
of instinct that informs it and supports.

- 115 Questi ne porta il foco inver la luna,
questi nei cor mortali è permotore,
questi la terra in sè stringe ed aduna.
- 118 Nè pur le creature che son fuore
d'intelligenza quest' arco saetta,
ma quelle ch' hanno intelletto ed amore.
- 121 La provvidenza che cotanto assetta,
del suo lume fa il ciel sempre quieto,
nel qual si volge quel ch' ha maggior fretta:
- 124 Ed ora lì, com' a sito decreto,
cen porta la virtù di quella corda,
che ciò che scocca drizza in segno lieto.
- 127 Ver'è che, come forma non s' accorda
molte fiate alla intenzion dell' arte,
perch' a risponder la materia è sorda,
- 130 Così da questo corso si diparte
talor la creatura, ch' ha potere
di piegar, così pinta, in altra parte,
- 133 (E sì come veder si può cadere
foco di nube) se l' impeto primo
l' atterra, torto da falso piacere.
- 136 Non dei più ammirar, se bene estimo,
lo tuo salir, se non come d' un rivo
se d' alto monte scende giuso ad imo.
- 139 Maraviglia sarebbe in te, se privo
d' impedimento giù ti fossi assiso,
come a terra quiete in foco vivo.'
- 142 Quinci rivolse inver lo cielo il viso.

- 115 This bears aloft the fire toward the moon,
this power doth mortal hearts forever move,
this bind the earth together and attune.
- 118 Not merely things created empty of
intelligence, this mighty crossbow hurls,
but those endowed with intellect and love.
- 121 The Providence that shapes all ends, enfurls
that heaven in dateless quiet with its light,
within which what has greatest hurry, whirls;
- 124 And thither now, as to appointed site,
bears us along the vigour of that cord
which aims at happy mark its arrow-flight.
- 127 True is it that, as form does not accord
at all times with the artisan's intent,
the stuff being deaf to the creative word,
- 130 Even so the creature from the way it went,
though thus impelled, possesses power of turning
away sometimes, to follow other bent
- 133 (Just as one may behold the lightning burning
down from the cloud), if the prime thrust be quite
earthward diverted by deceptive yearning.
- 136 Thou shouldst not wonder more, deem I aright,
at thy ascent, than if a brooklet be
plunged to the bottom from a mountain-height.
- 139 As great a marvel it would be in thee,
unhindered, to be seated on the plain,
as in live fire on earth tranquillity.'
- 142 Thereon she turned her face to heaven again.

NOTES

ll. 1-12. Subject of the Poem.

ll. 13-36. The Invocation. Beginning the other *cantiche* the Muses, daughters of Memory, were invoked; here he must look not only to these but to Divinity itself for inspiration.

l. 31. Since Daphne (the laurel) is daughter of the river-god Peneus, the bay-leaf is called Peneian.

ll. 34-6. The Poet expresses the modest hope that better poets may some time be animated by his example to treat more worthily of his great theme. Cyrrha, ancient port of Delphi, here stands by metonymy for Apollo.

ll. 37 ff. Here the action begins. The place of starting is the Earthly Paradise at the summit of the Mount of Purgatory. The time is Wednesday of Easter week, 1300, at noon. It is now some three weeks after the vernal equinox, when the circles of the celestial Equator, the Zodiac, and the Equinoctial colure cross the circle of the Horizon—a moment when the influence of the sun, merging with that of Aries (the best constellation), is most favourable. As the sun rises to mortals through a different gate every day, the conditions cannot be exactly those of the vernal equinox, but almost all the southern hemisphere is lighted and the northern correspondingly darkened. As the Mount of Purgatory is in the centre of the southern hemisphere, it follows that the hour is nearly that of noon 'yonder', while 'here', in Italy, it is evening. At Jerusalem, the centre of our hemisphere, opposite Purgatory, it is midnight.

l. 55. As in line 44, 'yonder' refers to the garden at the top of the Mount of Purgatory; 'in this place', to the actual world in which the Poet was writing.

ll. 64 ff. Near the close of *Purgatorio* xxxi, the mediatory power of the eyes of Beatrice is emphasized. Here they begin to raise Dante above the things of this world. The tale of Glaucus is found in Ovid, *Met.* xiii.

l. 70. No words can set forth the loosing of the ties that hold the soul down to earth.

ll. 73-5. The soul, as is expounded in *Purgatorio* xxv. 67-75, is breathed into man after 'the organizing of the brain has been completed in the embryo'. The allusion is to the declaration of St. Paul, 2 Corinthians xii. 2-4.

ll. 76-84. The desire for union with God causes the eternal movement of the outmost swiftest of the spheres, which is the prime motor of all the others. The Poet is already so raised and

'transhumanized' that he can now hear the music of the spheres.

ll. 121-6. In the tranquil empyrean, which is lighted with the presence of the Creator, whirls the Primum Mobile (that which first moved). See note to ll. 76-84.

ll. 127-35. The Poet here suggests an analogy between the Creator and the earthly artist who often finds his material 'repugnant to command'. Moreover, the Eternal Foresight endowed man with free will whereby he may deviate from the course along which the whole creation moves. Human nature, like fire, is endowed by the Creator with an inherent tendency, or instinct, to rise heavenward; 'Descent and fall to us is adverse'. If we resist the 'prime thrust' (*l'impeto primo*) it is because our wills make choice of some false semblance of the good.

This Canto, together with the first eighteen lines of the following, may be considered as a kind of proem to the *Paradiso*. The only action is the ascent of Dante with Beatrice through the region of fire between earth and moon. Cf. ll. 79-81; also ll. 58-63. As a whole, the Canto consists of the statement of the subject; the invocation to the God of Poesy; the description of the astrological conditions prevailing at the season when the young sun is in the Ram, and finally the succinct exposition by Beatrice of the universal force by virtue of which all natures move to their different ports across the vast sea of being. It is this force which bears the transhumanized Poet ('whether in the body or out of the body') up through air and fire and the impalpable ether.

CANTO SECONDO

- 1 O voi che siete in piccioletta barca,
desiderosi d' ascoltar, seguiti
retro al mio legno che cantando varca,
4 Tornate a riveder li vostri liti,
non vi mettete in pelago; chè forse
perdendo me rimarreste smarriti.
7 L' acqua ch' io prendo giammai non si corse:
Minerva spira, e conducemi Apollo,
e nove Muse mi dimostran l' Orse.
10 Voi altri pochi, che drizzaste il collo
per tempo al pan degli Angeli, del quale
vivesi qui, ma non sen vien satollo,
13 Metter potete ben per l' alto sale
vostro navigio, servando mio solco
dinanzi all' acqua che ritorna equale.
16 Quei gloriosi che passaro a Colco,
non s' ammiraron, come voi farete,
quando Jason vider fatto bifolco.
19 La concreata e perpetua sete
del deiforme regno cen portava
veloci, quasi come il ciel vedete.
22 Beatrice in suso, ed io in lei guardava;
e forse in tanto, in quanto un quadrel posa,
e vola, e dalla noce si dischiava,
25 Giunto mi vidi ove mirabil cosa
mi torse il viso a sè; e però quella,
cui non potea mia opra essere ascosa,
28 Volta ver me sì lieta come bella:
'Drizza la mente in Dio grata,' mi disse,
'che n' ha congiunti con la prima stella.'
31 Pareva a me che nube ne coprisse
lucida, spessa, solida e polita,
quasi adamante che lo sol ferisse.
34 Per entro sè l' eterna margarita
ne ricevette, com' acqua recepe
raggio di luce, permanendo unita.

CANTO II

Heaven of the Moon

- 1 O ye who in your little bark till now,
eager for listening, have made your way
behind my vessel with the singing prow,
4 Turn to your native shore while yet ye may:
do not put out to sea, lest haply there
by losing me, ye should remain astray.
7 None ever coursed the water where I fare:
Minerva breathes, Apollo pilots me,
and all nine Muses point me to the Bear.
10 Ye other few, with neck stretched yearningly
for bread of angels whereon ye are fain
to live while here, nor ever sated be,
13 Your ship may well put out upon the main,
following close upon my wake before
the salt-sea water returns smooth again.
16 Those glorious ones at Colchis who of yore
saw Jason made a ploughman, no such burning
amazement felt, that ye shall not feel more.
19 The concreate and everlasting yearning
for the Realm Deiform bore us well-nigh
as swiftly as moves heaven to your discerning.
22 I gazed on Beatrice, and she on high:
and in such time perchance as crossbow shot
alights and is unloosened and let fly,
25 I found myself arrived where sight was caught
compulsively by something marvellous:
whence, since my doing could be hidden not
28 From her, she faced me, blithe as beauteous:
'Lift up thy grateful mind to God!' she said,
'who with the prime star has united us.'
31 Around us there appeared to me to spread
a cloud smooth, dense, consolidate, and bright
like diamond whereon the sun is shed.
34 Into the pearl of everlasting white
we glided, even as water though unstirred
is penetrated by a ray of light.

- 37 S' io era corpo, e qui non si concepe
com' una dimension altra patio,
ch' esser convien se corpo in corpo repe,
- 40 Accender ne dovria più il disio
di veder quella essenza, in che si vede
come nostra natura e Dio s' unio.
- 43 Lì si vedrà ciò che tenem per fede,
non dimostrato, ma fia per sè noto,
a guisa del ver primo che l' uom crede.
- 46 Io risposi: 'Madonna, sì devoto
com' esser posso più, ringrazio lui
lo qual dal mortal mondo m' ha remoto.
- 49 Ma ditemi, che son li segni bui
di questo corpo, che laggiuso in terra
fan di Cain favoleggiare altrui?'
- 52 Ella sorrise alquanto, e poi: 'S' egli erra
l' opinion,' mi disse, 'dei mortali,
dove chiave di senso non disserra,
- 55 Certo non ti dovrien punger gli strali
d' ammirazione omai; poi retro ai sensi
vedi che la ragione ha corte l' ali.
- 58 Ma dimmi quel che tu da te ne pensi?'
Ed io: 'Ciò che n' appar quassù diverso,
credo che il fanno i corpi rari e densi.'
- 61 Ed ella: 'Certo assai vedrai sommerso
nel falso il creder tuo, se bene ascolti
l' argomentar ch' io gli farò avverso.
- 64 La spera ottava vi dimostra molti
lumi, li quali nel quale e nel quanto
notar si posson di diversi volti.
- 67 Se raro e denso ciò facesser tanto,
una sola virtù sarebbe in tutti,
più e men distributa, ed altrettanto.
- 70 Virtù diverse esser convengon frutti
di principii formali, e quei, fuor ch' uno,
seguiterieno a tua ragion distrutti.
- 73 Ancor, se raro fosse di quel bruno
cagion che tu domandi, od oltre in parte
fora di sua materia sì digiuno

- 37 If I was body (on earth it seems absurd
that one bulk brook another, as must be
if body into body glide!) more spurred
40 Should be the longing of our hearts to see
that Essence where we shall behold the plan
of our own nature blent with Deity.
43 There shall be seen what now by faith we scan,
not proved, but primal truth self-evident
and by direct cognition held by man.
46 I answered: 'Lady, with devout intent
I render thanks to Him who did ordain
that from the mortal world I should be sent.
49 But tell me, what those dusky marks which stain
this body, whereby on earth below the while
people are prone to fable about Cain?'
52 'And if,' she answered with a little smile,
'where key of sense effects no opening
mortal opinion may so far beguile,
55 Surely the shafts of wonder should not sting
thee longer, since even following the sense
thou seest that reason has too short a wing.
58 But tell me, what is thine own inference?'
And I: 'Methinks what here seems different
is brought about by bodies rare and dense.'
61 'Well shalt thou see what credence thou hast lent
to error,' she answered, 'giving heed unto
what I adduce in counter-argument.
64 The Eighth sphere shows forth many a light to you
which in their quantity and in their kind
may be observed from different points of view.
67 If only rare and dense herein combined,
one single virtue in all were absolute,
now more, now less, now equally assigned.
70 But Virtue different must needs be fruit
of fundamental forms, and these, save one,
thy reasoning would pluck up by the root.
73 Besides, if rarity produced that dun
thou mootest, would this planet through and through
be perforated, leaving matter none,

- 76 Esto pianeta, o sì come comparte
lo grasso e il magro un corpo, così questo
nel suo volume cangerebbe carte.
- 79 Se il primo fosse, fora manifesto
nell' eclissi del sol, per trasparere
lo lume, come in altro raro ingesto.
- 82 Questo non è; però è da vedere
dell' altro, e s' egli avvien ch' io l' altro cassi,
falsificato fia lo tuo parere.
- 85 S' egli è che questo raro non trapassi,
esser conviene un termine, da onde
lo suo contrario più passar non lassi;
- 88 Ed indi l' altrui raggio si rifonde
così, come color torna per vetro,
lo qual dietro a sè piombo nasconde.
- 91 Or dirai tu ch' ei si dimostra tetro
quivi lo raggio più che in altre parti,
per esser lì rifratto più a retro.
- 94 Da questa istanzia può diliberarti
esperienza, se giammai la provi,
ch' esser suol fonte ai rivi di vostr' arti.
- 97 Tre specchi prenderai, e due rimovi
da te d' un modo, e l' altro, più rimosso,
tr' ambo li primi gli occhi tuoi ritrovi.
- 100 Rivolto ad essi fa che dopo il dosso
ti stea un lume che i tre specchi accenda,
e torni a te da tutti ripercosso.
- 103 Benchè nel quanto tanto non si stenda
la vista più lontana, lì vedrai
come convien ch' egualmente risplenda.
- 106 Or come ai colpi delli caldi rai
della neve riman nudo il soggetto
e dal colore e dal freddo primai;
- 109 Così rimaso te nello intelletto
voglio informar di luce sì vivace,
che ti tremolerà nel suo aspetto.
- 112 Dentro dal ciel della divina pace
si gira un corpo, nella cui virtute
l' esser di tutto suo contento giace.

- 76 Or otherwise, as fleshly bodies do
the fat and lean apportion, so would this
alternate leaves within its book renew.
- 79 Supposing true the first hypothesis,
the sunlight in eclipse would be descried
right through, as through whatever orifice.
- 82 This false, consider we the other side,
and if I chance to find an error there
then thy opinion will be falsified.
- 85 Now if this rareness find no thoroughfare,
there needs must be some limit hindering
the counter-penetration of the rare;
- 88 Thence will the ray of other body spring
reverberated backward, in such kind
as back from leaded glass comes colouring.
- 91 But thou wilt say that here appears more blind
the radiance than in regions othersome,
from being reflected further from behind.
- 94 Such an objection may be overcome
experimentally, if thou wouldst try
that fountain of all human masterdom.
- 97 Take mirrors three, and two of them set by
at equal distance, and between the twain
the other further off, before thine eye.
- 100 Turning toward them, let a light remain
behind thy back, kindling the mirrors three
and smitten by them all to thee again.
- 103 Whereas the further light will seem to thee
less ample as to size, yet will it show
an equal lustre, of necessity.
- 106 Now, even as the ground beneath the snow
is stripped of previous colour and of cold
beneath the beating of the warm rays, so
- 109 Thy mind, being stripped of error fold on fold,
will I inform with light so crystalline
that it shall quiver now thou canst behold.
- 112 Within the Heaven that harbours Peace Divine
circles a body in whose virtue lies
the being of whatever it enshrine.

- 115 Lo ciel seguente, ch' ha tante vedute,
quell' esser parte per diverse essenze
da lui distinte e da lui contenute.
- 118 Gli altri giron per varie differenze
le distinzion che dentro da sè hanno
dispongono a lor fini e lor semenze.
- 121 Questi organi del mondo così vanno,
come tu vedi omai, di grado in grado,
che di su prendono, e di sotto fanno.
- 124 Riguarda bene a me sì com' io vado
per questo loco al ver che tu disiri,
sì che poi sappi sol tener lo guado.
- 127 Lo moto e la virtù dei santi giri,
come dal fabbro l' arte del martello,
dai beati motor convien che spiri;
- 130 E il ciel, cui tanti lumi fanno bello,
dalla mente profonda che lui volve
prende l' image, e fassene suggello.
- 133 E come l' alma dentro a vostra polve
per differenti membra, e conformate
a diverse potenze, si risolve;
- 136 Così l' intelligenza sua bontate
moltiplicata per le stelle spiega,
girando sè sopra sua unitate.
- 139 Virtù diversa fa diversa lega
col prezioso corpo ch' ell' avviva,
nel qual, sì come vita in voi, si lega.
- 142 Per la natura lieta onde deriva,
la virtù mista per lo corpo luce,
come letizia per pupilla viva.
- 145 Da essa vien ciò che da luce a luce
par differente, non da denso e raro:
essa è formal principio che produce,
- 148 Conforme a sua bontà, lo turbo e il chiaro.'

- 115 The following heaven, which has so many eyes,
imparts that form through various types, and these
distinct from it, which yet it doth comprise.
- 118 The other spheres in different degrees
dispose of their distinctive elements
according to their seeds and purposes.
- 121 Thou seest these universal instruments
thus drawing from above, while raining down
from grade to lower grade their influence.
- 124 Look at me finding passage for thine own
arrival at the truth thou art fain to scan,
and know henceforth to keep the ford alone!
- 127 The breath of blessed Movers needs must fan
motion and influence of holy sphere,
as craft of hammer moves by artisan.
- 130 And that same Heaven the many lights make fair,
from the Deep Mind that gives it whirl and thrust
so takes the image and so seals it there.
- 133 And as the soul within your human dust
makes different members work in unison,
distributed through each in measure just,
- 136 So doth the Mind deploy its benison
multiplied through the starry firmament,
but turns upon Itself, remaining One.
- 139 Each different power makes mixture different
with precious body rendered quick thereby,
wherewith, like life within you, it is blent.
- 142 By glad endowment of the Nature High,
this mingled virtue through the body glows,
as gladness lights the pupil of the eye.
- 145 From this proceeds whatever difference shows
'twixt light and light, and not from rare and dense:
this is the intrinsic principle whence flows
- 148 The dark and bright, as by its excellence.'

NOTES

ll. 1-6. This warning doubtless implies that such sublime interpretations of Nature in its real underlying meanings, ethical and symbolic, as that with which the foregoing Canto closes, and such as the Poet intends to continue in this Canto, are likely to be rocks of offence to the superficial. He wishes to spare Beatrice the mortification of wasting her words upon listless ears. She is expected to deliver to him a moral philosophy loftier than that which he has heard even from Virgil, who, indeed, has more than once referred him to Beatrice for difficult solutions.

ll. 7-9. It is significant that the Poet exhibits no hesitancy or self-distrust, as at the outset (*Inferno* ii. 31-42). Upon beginning the *Purgatorio* he especially invokes Calliope (Muse of epic poetry); here, secure in the guidance of all the Muses and of Apollo himself, turning his prow to the high seas he shakes out his sails to the steady breeze breathed forth by the Goddess of Wisdom.

ll. 10-12. This metaphor is here a terse repetition of that in the very first section of the *Banquet* (*Convivio*). As to the thought, the suggestion is probably correct that comparatively few continue the voyage of discovery. But those few may enter the true El Dorado.

ll. 16-18. The Poet's hand is stronger than that of the hero who yoked the fire-breathing bulls and ploughed the field for the sowing of the dragon-teeth.

l. 24. Order of verbs reversed to suggest instantaneous action.

l. 31. Heaven of the Moon.

ll. 37 ff. Mystery of the union of the human with the Divine.

ll. 49-51. Spots in the Moon. For the legend of Cain and the thorns, cf. *Inferno* xx. 126; also *Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. i:

'This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,
Presenteth Moonshine.'

l. 52. The smile of Beatrice, illumined more and more with the radiance of the Divine, is a *leitmotif* of the *Paradiso*.

l. 59. Dante's former opinion.

l. 63. The correct view (scholastic reasoning).

l. 64 to end. The astrological theory of the time was that the starry heavens, although of one substance, vary in quantity and kind, and to these differences correspond the diverse influences they are supposed to exercise on the earth and on

human affairs. The same principle, it is argued, must apply to the spots in the moon. These appearances proceed from causes much deeper than mere rarity and density. The spots, then, are no mere fortuitous or meaningless physical phenomena, but rather signet-marks of creative intellect, and therefore full of significance, could one decipher the hieroglyphics.

ll. 70-8. Albertus Magnus (Albert of Cologne), whom we shall meet later as master of the master, held this curious theory of rare and dense. But from the belief in starry influences (inflowings), which nobody thought of controverting, it seems to follow that we must look for fundamental forms (principles). The comparisons are intended to simplify the inference that, if the dark spots were not rare all the way through, then the rare and dense matter would be stratified, like fat and lean in a body, or lying one upon another like the leaves of a book.

l. 94. The Experiment (the modern method).

l. 112. Within the still Empyrean circles the swift Primum Mobile, communicating motion and Divine influences to the heaven of the fixed stars, and so down, through the successive interior and less swiftly whirling spheres, to earth at the centre.

l. 115. Fixed stars.

ll. 124 ff. The foregoing process of reasoning must appear to the modern mind quaint, and the experiment is certainly too crude to lead to any accurate result. It is, however, notable that there should be any experiment. It exhibits a properly directed curiosity and a method certainly unusual among the schoolmen. What then is the truth, if any, that is to enable the seeker 'to keep the ford alone' in the swirling stream of things? Evidently it is that one must look beneath and behind natural phenomena, for what was then called 'the form', which Plato had named 'the idea'. Beatrice is trying to encourage Dante not to be obstructed by 'unconcerning things, matters of fact',—of supposed fact.

'One Spirit's plastic stress

Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear.'

(Shelley's *Adonais*, xliii.)

l. 127. Celestial intelligences.

l. 147. This metaphysical principle has baffled many readers, beginning with Dante's own son Pietro, who frankly records his want of comprehension. Its profound significance has been best set forth by George Santayana in his noteworthy essay on our Poet.

CANTO TERZO

- 1 Quel sol, che pria d' amor mi scaldò il petto,
di bella verità m' avea scoperto,
provando e riprovando, il dolce aspetto;
- 4 Ed io, per confessar corretto e certo
me stesso, tanto quanto si convenne,
levai lo capo a proferer più erto.
- 7 Ma vision m' apparve, che ritenne
a sè me tanto stretto per vedersi,
che di mia confession non mi sovvenne.
- 10 Quali per vetri trasparenti e tersi,
o ver per acque nitide e tranquille,
non sì profonde che i fonde sien persi,
- 13 Tornan dei nostri visi le postille
debili sì, che perla in bianca fronte
non vien men tosto alle nostre pupille;
- 16 Tali vid' io più facce a parlar pronte,
perch' io dentro all' error contrario corsi
a quel ch' accese amor tra l' uomo e il fonte.
- 19 Subito, sì com' io di lor m' accorsi,
quelle stimando specchiati sembianti,
per veder di cui fosser, gli occhi torsi;
- 22 E nulla vidi, e ritorsili avanti
dritti nel lume della dolce guida,
che sorridendo ardea negli occhi santi.
- 25 'Non ti maravigliar perch' io sorrida,'
mi disse, 'appresso il tuo pueril coto,
poi sopra il vero ancor lo piè non fida,
- 28 Ma ti rivolge, come suole, a voto.
Vere sustanzie son ciò che tu vedi,
qui rilegate per manco di voto.
- 31 Però parla con esse, ed odi, e credi;
chè la verace luce che le appaga
da sè non lascia lor torcer li piedi.'
- 34 Ed io all' ombra, che pareva più vaga
di ragionar, drizza' mi, e cominciai,
quasi com' uom cui troppa voglia ismaga:

CANTO III

Spirits of Women in the Lunar Heaven

- 1 The sun that erst with love had warmed my breast
had now the fair sweet face of truth, by proof
and refutation, rendered manifest;
- 4 And to confess, so far as was behoof,
myself corrected thus and confident,
my head for speech was lifted more aloof.
- 7 But something gleamed on me, whence so intent
to gaze thereon my baffled vision grew,
that my confession out of memory went.
- 10 As through transparent polished glass, or through
still and pellucid waters, of too mean
a depth to have the bottom lost to view,
- 13 Come back the contours of our faces, seen
so pallidly that pearl on forehead white
is caught as quickly if the eye is keen,—
- 16 Such faces, fain for speaking, came to sight;
whence I in counter-error fell thereby
to what befell the fount-enamoured wight.
- 19 The instant that aware of them was I,—
reflected images by my surmise,—
to see of whom they were, I turned mine eye;
- 22 But, seeing nothing, went with my surprise
straight to the light of her, my Leader sweet,
whence smiling kindled in her holy eyes.
- 25 She said: 'No wonder if with smiles I meet
this exhibition of thy childish mind
unwilling yet to truth to trust its feet,
- 28 But turns thee back in vain, after its kind.
True substances are what thou dost perceive,
here for some forfeiture of vows assigned.
- 31 Whence talk with them, and listen, and believe;
for that which gives them peace, the one true Fire,
suffers their feet its purlieu not to leave.'
- 34 And to that shade who seemed most to require
question with me, began I, tow'rd it bended
like one bewildered by too great desire:

- 37 'O ben creato spirito, che a' rai
di vita eterna la dolcezza senti,
che non gustata non s' intende mai;
40 Grazioso mi fia, se mi contenti
del nome tuo e della vostra sorte.'
Ond' ella pronta e con occhi ridenti:
43 'La nostra carità non serra porte
a giusta voglia, se non come quella
che vuol simile a sè tutta sua corte.
46 Io fui nel mondo vergine sorella;
e se la mente tua ben si riguarda,
non mi ti celerà l'esser più bella,
49 Ma riconoscerai ch'io son Piccarda,
che posta qui con questi altri beati,
beata sono in la spera più tarda.
52 Li nostri affetti, che solo infiammati
son nel piacer dello Spirito Santo,
letizian del suo ordine formati.
55 E questa sorte, che par giù cotanto,
però n'è data, perchè fur negletti
li nostri voti, e vòti in alcun canto.'
58 Ond' io a lei: 'Ne' mirabili aspetti
vostri risplende non so che divino,
che vi trasmuta dai primi concetti.
61 Però non fui a rimembrar festino,
ma or m' aiuta ciò che tu mi dici,
sì che raffigurar m'è più latino.
64 Ma dimmi: voi che siete qui felici,
desiderate voi più alto loco
per più vedere, o per più farvi amici?'
67 Con quelle altr' ombre pria sorrise un poco;
da indi mi rispose tanto lieta,
ch'arder pareva d'amor nel primo foco:
70 'Frate, la nostra volontà quieta
virtù di carità, che fa volerne
sol quel ch'avemo, e d'altro non ci asseta.
73 Se disiassimo esser più superne,
foran discordi li nostri disiri
dal voler di colui che qui ne cerne

- 37 'O spirit born to bliss, with radiance blended
of life eterne in sweet felicity
that, tasted not, is never comprehended,
- 40 Thou wilt be gracious to content in me
the craving for thy name, and for your lot.'
Whereon with smiling eyes and promptly, she:
- 43 'To just desire our charity doth not
deny the door, more than His love doth so
who wills His Court all in His image wrought.
- 46 I was a virgin sister there below;
and if thou recollect, it will appear
that greater beauty doth not hide me: know
- 49 I am Piccarda, relegated here
together with these others who are blest,
and myself blessed in the slowest sphere.
- 52 All our affections, kindled as may best
conform to pleasure of the Holy Spirit,
rejoice being fashioned after His behest.
- 55 And this low-seeming lot that we inherit
is given to us because we did our vow
make in some manner void, or did defer it.'
- 58 'Your wondrous faces shine, I know not how,'
was my reply, 'with some diviner grace,
transmuting them from what we knew ere now;
- 61 Whence was my memory of laggard pace;
but what thou tellest helps me to make clear
thy features which now better I retrace.
- 64 But tell me, ye whose blessedness is here,
do ye desire a loftier place above
to grow in vision or become more dear?'
- 67 Her flitting smile lit up the faces of
those others; then she spoke so blithesomely
she seemed to kindle with first fire of love:
- 70 'Brother, the influence of charity
contents our will, alone solicitous
for what we have,—no craving else have we.
- 73 Did we desire a place more glorious,
then our desires would be at variance
with will of Him who here assigneth us;

- 76 Che vedrai non capere in questi giri,
s'essere in carità è qui *necesse*,
e se la sua natura ben rimiri.
- 79 Anzi è formale ad esto beato *esse*
tenersi dentro alla divina voglia,
per ch'una fansi nostre voglie stesse.
- 82 Sì che, come noi sem di soglia in soglia
per questo regno, a tutto il regno piace,
com'allo re ch'a suo voler ne invoglia:
- 85 E 'n la sua volontate è nostra pace;
ella è quel mare al qual tutto si move
ciò ch'ella crea, e che natura face.'
- 88 Chiaro mi fu allor com'ogni dove
in cielo è Paradiso, e sì la grazia
del sommo ben d'un modo non vi piove.
- 91 Ma sì com'egli avvien, se un cibo sazia,
e d'un altro rimane ancor la gola,
che quel si chiede, e di quel si ringrazia;
- 94 Così fec'io con atto e con parola,
per apprender da lei qual fu la tela
onde non trasse infino a co la spola.
- 97 'Perfetta vita ed alto merto inciela
Donna più su,' mi disse, 'alla cui norma
nel vostro mondo giù si veste e vela,
- 100 Perchè in fino al morir si vegghi e dorma
con quello sposo ch'ogni voto accetta,
che caritate a suo piacer conforma.
- 103 Dal mondo, per seguirla, giovinetta
fuggi'mi, e nel suo abito mi chiusi,
e promisi la via della sua setta.
- 106 Uomini poi, a mal più ch'al bene usi,
fuor mi rapiron della dolce chiostra;
e Dio si sa qual poi mia vita fusi.
- 109 E quest'altro splendor, che ti si mostra
dalla mia destra parte, e che s'accende
di tutto il lume della spera nostra,
- 112 Ciò ch'io dico di me di sè intende:
sorella fu, e così le fu tolta
di capo l'ombra delle sacre bende.

- 76 These circles have no room for dissonance,
as thou shalt see, for herein love is fate,
if thou behold its nature not askance.
- 79 Nay, 't is the essence of this blessed state
to dwell within the Will Divine alone,
whereby our wills with His participate.
- 82 So that throughout this realm, from zone to zone,
we pleasure the whole realm without surcease,
and please the King who inwills us with His Own;
- 85 And in His Will is our eternal peace;
and everything is moving to that sea,—
all it creates as nature gives increase.'
- 88 Then only was the truth made clear to me
that everywhere in Heaven is Paradise
where Grace Supreme rains not in one degree.
- 91 But, as will happen, should one food entice,
other than that wherewith we have been fed,
grateful for that, we crave for this: precise
- 94 The parallel to what I did and said,
seeking to learn what web it was whereof
she had not drawn the shuttle to the head.
- 97 'Life perfect and high worth enheaven above,'
she said thereto, 'a Lady among the blest,
under whose rule in your world women love
- 100 To robe and veil, till death to watch and rest
beside that Spouse, accepter and rewarder
of vows which love conforms to His request.
- 103 To follow her, of maiden weeds discarder,
fleeing the world and in her habit dressing,
I pledged me to the pathway of her Order.
- 106 Thereafter men more used to ban than blessing
ravished me from the cloister sweet: God knoweth
what my life then, without mine own confessing.
- 109 This other splendour on my right who showeth
her beauty to thee, luminously burning
with all the light that in our circle gloweth,
- 112 Takes to herself these words myself concerning:
a sister she, and so from her was riven
the veil by hands its holy shadow spurning.

- 115 Ma poi che pur al mondo fu rivolta
 contra suo grato e contra buona usanza,
 non fu dal vel del cor giammai disciolta.
- 118 Quest'è la luce della gran Costanza,
 che del secondo vento di Soave
 generò il terzo, e l'ultima possanza.'
- 121 Così parlommi, e poi cominciò: *Ave,*
 Maria, cantando; e cantando vanio,
 come per acqua cupa cosa grave.
- 124 La vista mia, che tanto la seguio
 quanto possibil fu, poi che la perse,
 volsesi al segno di maggior disio,
- 127 Ed a Beatrice tutta si converse;
 ma quella folgorò nello mio sguardo
 sì che da prima il viso non sofferse;
- 130 E ciò mi fece a domandar più tardo.

- 115 But when she back into the world was driven
despite her wish and wont legitimate,
she never from her heart the veil had given.
- 118 This is the radiance of Constance great,
who to the Second Blast of Swabia
bore the Third Puissance, and ultimate.'
- 121 So spake she, and in chant began to say
Ave Maria, and chanting from me stole
as through deep water sinks a weight away.
- 124 My vision, straining to pursue that soul
to the utmost, when she vanished into bliss,
turned to the mark of a more longed-for goal,
- 127 Reverting wholly round to Beatrice;
but such a lightning flashed she on my look
that first my sight endured it not; and this
- 130 So gave me pause that question I forsook.

NOTES

l. 2. That the supreme intellect of the age should have accepted such reasoning as the foregoing, is interesting proof of the state of knowledge then, and of the danger of proceeding upon a false theory.

ll. 7-18. Marvellous vision: Dante mistakes spirits for reflected images. The lovely apparitions, glimmering like pearls on a white brow, are so dim as to seem but shadows, causing the Poet to fall into error contrary to that of Narcissus.

l. 24. The smile of Beatrice, growing in radiance from sphere to sphere, a recurring theme treated with many beautiful variations.

ll. 41 and 58-65. 'Thy' is the singular; 'your', 'ye', the plural, referring to the whole company of spirits. This distinction, far more obvious in the Latin tongues than in ours, is observed throughout this translation; together with the use of the plural forms (you, your) to personages who should be addressed with especial formality.

l. 49. Piccarda Donati (see *Purgatorio* xxiv, near the beginning; also the prediction of the fate of Corso Donati in same Canto).

l. 57. Remiss in execution of vows.

l. 65. Degrees of beatitude.

l. 85. *E'n la sua voluntate è nostra pace*: 'and in His Will is our peace'. The very nature of our tongue renders impossible anything like a literal translation of this noble line in verse, either as to meaning or as to music. To break the line, as does Longfellow, is to make this solemn truth appear a mere *obiter dictum*. The words 'will' and 'peace' are but two brief, terse syllables, better suited to the word of command than to song; whereas the Italian equivalents, in filling out the measure, satisfy both ear and mind. Any reader willing to take the little pains required to know the sounds of the Italian vowels, may perceive the majestic swell of *voluntate* culminating like a great wave in the middle of the line, and having as neighbours mere ancillary vocables over which the voice glides without rest or stress; until at last this mighty force, without display of violence, gently rolls upon our human shore with the whisper *Pace*. As to meaning, one may ask wherein consists our beatitude if not in bringing desire into harmony with Will or Law that governs the world, with Nature, with the Will of God, however variously man may conceive Him?

ll. 97 ff. Santa Clara of Assisi.

ll. 106 ff. Violence done to Piccarda by Corso Donati. Piccarda's reference to her brother reminds one of that of Pia to her husband, although perhaps less tender (*Purgatorio*, close of Canto v).

l. 119. The three blasts of Swabia are Frederick Barbarossa, Henry VI, and Frederick II. For the fate of her grandson, Manfred, see *Purgatorio* iii. She herself, being heiress to the crown of Sicily, became wife of Barbarossa's son Henry, and mother of the most illustrious monarch who ever bore the name of Frederick. During the latter's minority, Constance ruled firmly and prudently. That she had been at one time a nun was a popular tradition accepted by Dante but not by modern historical students.

CANTO QUARTO

- 1 Intra due cibi, distanti e moventi
d'un modo, prima si morria di fame,
che liber' uomo l'un recasse ai denti.
- 4 Sì si starebbe un agno intra due brame
di fieri lupi, egualmente temendo;
sì si starebbe un cane intra due dame.
- 7 Per che, s'io mi tacea, me non riprendo,
dalli miei dubbi d'un modo sospinto,
poich'era necessario, nè commendo.
- 10 Io mi tacea, ma il mio disir dipinto
m'era nel viso, e il domandar con ello
più caldo assai, che per parlar distinto.
- 13 Fe' sì Beatrice, qual fe' Daniello,
Nabuccodonosor levando d'ira,
che l'avea fatto ingiustamente fello,
- 16 E disse: 'Io veggio ben come ti tira
uno ed altro disio, sì che tua cura
sè stessa lega sì che fuor non spira.
- 19 Tu argomenti: "Se il buon voler dura,
la violenza altrui per qual ragione
di meritar mi scema la misura?"
- 22 Ancor di dubitar ti dà cagione,
parer tornarsi l'anime alle stelle,
secondo la sentenza di Platone.
- 25 Queste son le question che nel tuo *velle*
pontano egualmente; e però pria
tratterò quella che più ha di felle.
- 28 Dei Serafin colui che più s'india,
Moisè, Samuel, e quel Giovanni,
qual prender vuoli, io dico, non Maria,
- 31 Non hanno in altro cielo i loro scanni,
che quègli spirti che mo t'appariro,
nè hanno all'esser lor più o meno anni.
- 34 Ma tutti fanno bello il primo giro,
e differentemente han dolce vita,
per sentir più e men l'eterno spiro.

CANTO IV

Solution of Perplexing Questions

- 1 Between two foods alike to appetite
and like afar, a free man, I suppose,
would starve before of either he would bite;
- 4 So would a lamb, between the hungry throes
of two fierce wolves, feel equipoise of dread,
so hesitate a hound between two does.
- 7 Whence by my doubts alike solicited
inevitably, censure can be none
nor commendation, if I nothing said.
- 10 And I said nothing; but desire upon
my face was pictured, questioning as well,
set forth more fervently than words had done.
- 13 Like Daniel when he did the miracle,—
Nebuchadnezzar from the anger turning
that first had rendered him unjustly fell,—
- 16 So Beatrice did, and said: ‘I see one yearning
and the other draw thee so, that eagerness
ties up thy tongue to breathe no dear concerning.
- 19 Thou urgest: “By what justice can duress
imposed by others, if persist good will,
render the measure of my merit less?”
- 22 Perplexes thee another question still:
“Do souls rejoin the stars, as it would seem,
and the idea of Plato thus fulfil?”
- 25 These questions balance equally the beam
of thy desire; and therefore I incline
to treat that first whose venom is extreme.
- 28 Not he of Seraphim the most Divine,
not Moses, Samuel, and either John
thou mayest choose to take, not Mary in fine,
- 31 Do hold their seats in any other zone
of Heaven than those thou didst but now discern,
nor more nor fewer years of being own.
- 34 All make the Primal Circle fair, and earn
life of sweet bliss in different measure here,
through feeling more or less the breath eterne.

- 37 Qui si mostraron, non perchè sortita
sia questa spera lor; ma per far segno
della celestial ch' ha men salita.
- 40 Così parlar conviensi al vostro ingegno,
perocchè solo da sensato apprende
ciò che fa poscia d' intelletto degno.
- 43 Per questo la Scrittura condiscende
a vostra facultate, e piedi e mano
attribuisce a Dio, ed altro intende;
- 46 E santa Chiesa con aspetto umano
Gabriel e Michel vi rappresenta,
e l' altro che Tobia rifece sano.
- 49 Quel che Timeo dell' anime argomenta
non è simile a ciò che qui si vede,
però che, come dice, par che senta.
- 52 Dice che l' alma alla sua stella riede,
credendo quella quindi esser decisa,
quando natura per forma la diede.
- 55 E forse sua sentenza è d' altra guisa
che la voce non suona, ed esser puote
con intenzion da non esser derisa.
- 58 S' egl' intende tornare a queste rote
l' onor dell' influenza e il biasmo, forse
in alcun vero suo arco percolte.
- 61 Questo principio male inteso torse
già tutto il mondo quasi, sì che Giove,
Mercurio e Marte a nominar trascorse.
- 64 L' altra dubitazione che ti commove
ha men velen, perocchè sua malizia
non ti poria menar da me altrove.
- 67 Parere ingiusta la nostra giustizia
negli occhi dei mortali, è argomento
di fede, e non d' eretica nequizia.
- 70 Ma perchè puote vostro accorgimento
ben penetrare a questa veritate,
come disiri, ti farò contento.
- 73 Se violenza è quando quel che pate
niente conferisce a quel che isforza,
non fur quest' alme per essa scusate;

- 37 Not as allotted here did they appear
 within this heaven, but as a sign intending
 the least exalted though celestial sphere.
- 40 My words perforce unto your wit are bending,
 which grasps but by perception of the sense
 what then it worthy makes for comprehending.
- 43 The Holy Scriptures, condescending hence
 to your conceit, with foot and hand endue
 the Deity, with mystic difference;
- 46 And Holy Church so represents to you
 Michael and Gabriel with human traits,
 and the other who gave Tobit health anew.
- 49 That which Timaeus of the soul debates
 is different from that seen here so far,—
 for seemingly he thinks it as he states.
- 52 He says the soul returns to its own star,
 whence nature actuated its descent,
 giving it in the flesh an avatar.
- 55 And in his doctrine haply more is meant
 than meets the ear, and may have sense whereto
 befits it not to be irreverent.
- 58 If, for the influence they rain on you,
 he means one must approve and disapprove
 these wheels, perchance his bow hits something true.
- 61 This principle, ill comprehended, drove
 almost the whole world formerly astray
 in naming Mars and Mercury and Jove.
- 64 The other dubitance that gives thee stay
 empoisons less, for its malignity
 could never lead thee from myself away.
- 67 That Justice here should seem unjust to be
 in mortal vision, is an argument
 of faith, not heretic iniquity.
- 70 But since ye, humanly intelligent,
 can pierce into this truth, as thou dost choose
 I undertake to render thee content.
- 73 If violence be when he who bears abuse
 has nothing to the wrong contributed,
 these souls could claim on that score no excuse:

- 76 Chè volontà, se non vuol, non si ammorza,
ma fa come natura face in foco,
se mille volte violenza il torza;
- 79 Perchè, s' ella si piega assai o poco,
segue la forza; e così queste fero,
possendo ritornare al santo loco.
- 82 Se fosse stato lor volere intero,
come tenne Lorenzo in sulla grada,
e fece Muzio alla sua man severo,
- 85 Così le avria ripinte per la strada
ond' eran tratte, come furo sciolte;
ma così salda voglia è troppo rada.
- 88 E per queste parole, se ricolte
l' hai come devi, è l' argomento casso,
che t' avria fatto noia ancor più volte.
- 91 Ma or ti s' attraversa un altro passo
dinanzi agli occhi tal, che per te stesso
non usciresti, pria saresti lasso.
- 94 Io t' ho per certo nella mente messo,
ch' alma beata non poria mentire,
perocch' è sempre al primo vero appresso:
- 97 E poi potesti da Piccarda udire,
che l' affezion del vel Costanza tenne,
sì ch' ella par qui meco contradire.
- 100 Molte fiate già, frate, addivenne
che per fuggir periglio, contro a grato
si fe' di quel che far non si convenne;
- 103 Come Almeone, che, di ciò pregato
dal padre suo, la propria madre spense,
per non perder pietà si fe' spietato.
- 106 A questo punto voglio che tu pense
che la forza al voler si mischia, e fanno
sì che scusar non si posson l' offense.
- 109 Voglia assoluta non consente al danno,
ma consentevi in tanto in quanto teme,
se si ritrae, cadere in più affanno.
- 112 Però, quando Piccarda quello esprime,
della voglia assoluta intende, ed io
dell' altra, sì che ver diciamo insieme.'

- 76 For will, unwilling, never can be dead,
but doth as nature doeth in the fire
which by a thousand gusts is buffeted.
- 79 For, little or much as it may yield, desire
abets the violence: and these did thus,
free to their sanctuary to retire.
- 82 Had but their will been whole and vigorous,
like that which fastened Lawrence to his grill
and ruthless to his hand made Mucius,
- 85 Then up the road whence they were dragged, their will
would have impelled them, soon as they were free;
but all too rare is will so inflexible.
- 88 And by these words, if thou hast duteously
gathered them up, is quashed the argument
that would yet many a time have troubled thee.
- 91 But now another cross-entanglement
puzzles thine eyes, wherethrough thou couldst not
an issue by thyself, until forspent. [find
- 94 I have for certain put into thy mind
that never could speak false a soul in bliss,
since to the source of truth forever joined;
- 97 Then mayst have understood Piccarda amiss
that Constance to the veil was ever true:
so that she seems to contradict me in this.
- 100 Many a time, my brother, urged thereto
by hope of scaping peril, under stress,
men have done what they ought not, would not do;
- 103 Even as Alcmaeon,—who by prayer express
of his own sire, his mother life refused,—
not to lose piety, grew pitiless.
- 106 Think, pray, when come to this, that force is fused
with will together, and so the two are blent
that the offences cannot be excused.
- 109 Will absolute doth not to ill consent:
consenting just so far as it may rue,
if it resist, some greater detriment.
- 112 Therefore Piccarda, saying what is true,
means absolute volition; I, however,
the other,—whence in truth agree we two.'

- 115 Cotal fu l'ondeggiar del santo rio,
ch'uscì del fonte ond'ogni ver deriva;
tal pose in pace uno ed altro disio.
- 118 'O amanza del primo amante, o diva,'
diss'io appresso, 'il cui parlar m'inonda,
e scalda sì, che più e più m'avviva,
- 121 Non è l'affezion mia tanto profonda,
che basti a render voi grazia per grazia;
ma quei che vede e puote, a ciò risponda.
- 124 Io veggio ben che giammai non si sazia
nostro intelletto, se il ver non lo illustra,
di fuor dal qual nessun vero si spazia.
- 127 Posasi in esso, come fiera in lustra,
tosto che giunto l'ha: e giugner puollo;
se non, ciascun disio sarebbe *frustra*.
- 130 Nasce per quello, a guisa di rampollo,
appiè del vero il dubbio: ed è natura,
ch'al sommo pinga noi di collo in collo.
- 133 Questo m'invita, questo m'assicura,
con riverenza, donna, a domandarvi
d'un'altra verità che m'è oscura.
- 136 Io vo' saper se l'uom può satisfarvi
ai voti manchi sì con altri beni,
ch'alla vostra statera non sien parvi.'
- 139 Beatrice mi guardò con gli occhi pieni
di faville d'amor, così divini,
che vinta mia virtù diede le reni,
- 142 E quasi mi perdei con gli occhi chini.

- 115 Such was the rippling of the holy river
out of the fountain whence all truth flows over,
setting at rest both my desires forever.
- 118 'Divine one, O belov'd of the First Lover,'
I straightway said, 'whose words are in me burning
and flooding till I life on life recover,
- 121 Not deep enough the channel of my yearning
for thanks of mine coequal with your favour:
may He requite who can and is discerning!
- 124 I see our mind unsated still with savour
of any truth, till of that truth aware
beyond which is no light that doth not waver.
- 127 Therein it rests, like animal in lair
when it attaineth; and it can attain,
else frustrate every craving for it were.
- 130 Whence like a shoot doubt ever springs again
at foot of truth; and so from height to height
doth nature urge us summitward amain.
- 133 This doth assurance give me, this invite
to ask with reverence of another theme,
O Lady, wherein truth is dark to sight.
- 136 Fain would I know if man may ever dream
with good to so amend vows forfeited,
they shall not in your balance kick the beam.'
- 139 Beatrice gazed at me with eyes that sped
flashes of love, divine of radiance,
so that my vanquished force of vision fled,
- 142 And all but lost was I, with bended glance.

NOTES

ll. 1-9. Sophism which passed into a proverb as that of Buridan's ass starving between two exactly equivalent 'bottles' of hay. It is in artistic keeping that a Canto dealing so largely with the dilemma of the broken vow should begin with this ancient paradox. Buridan himself is younger than Dante, but the sophism is older than either.

ll. 10-24. Beatrice reads in Dante's face the two questions. The first arises from observing that Piccarda and Constance, who would have kept the vow but for violence, occupy a relatively low place among the blest. The second arises from seeing their souls apparently relegated to the sphere of the moon.

l. 13. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar is told in the second chapter of the book of Daniel. For Dante's most elaborate use of it, cf. *Inferno* xiv. 103 ff.

ll. 27-36. The second question is the more poisonous in being contrary to the Christian doctrine that all the blest are citizens of that Rome whereof Christ is a Roman (*Purgatorio* xxxii. 102), 'fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God' (Ephesians ii. 19).

ll. 37 ff. The appearances in the various spheres emblematic.

ll. 49 ff. Beatrice goes on to show that Plato's error leads naturally to polytheism, but concedes that it deserves respectful consideration as shadowing forth the astrological doctrine (so often referred to by Dante as well as by our own classic poets) of the varying influences of the planetary spheres by whose virtue in our world 'nothing walks on aimless feet'.

ll. 64 ff. The other doubt is the reverse of heretical, because an indication of faith. Cf. ll. 130-2.

ll. 73 ff. Violence done to human will, due to laxity which abets. The question leads inevitably to a discussion of the freedom of the will. Cf. Milton: 'Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind' (*Comus*, l. 663). Shakespeare touches the same note with his peculiar power:

'Though my gross blood be stained with this abuse,
Immaculate and spotless is my mind;
That was not forced; that never was inclined
To accessory yieldings, but still pure
Doth in her poisoned closet yet endure.'

Lucrece, ll. 1655-9.

ll. 83 ff. As so frequently a Christian and a pagan example: Mucius burned off his right hand for having failed in the crisis

against the arch-enemy of Rome. St. Lawrence derisively begged his tormentors to turn him over and grill the other side.

ll. 97 ff. Analysis of the assertion of Piccarda about Constance.

l. 103. Cf. *Purgatorio* xii. 49-51. Out of piety to his father he became pitiless to his mother (Amphiaräus and Eriphylë). In connexion with the mention of Amphiaräus (*Inferno* xx. 28) there is similar word-play: 'Here piety lives on in pity dead.' In Italian, *pietà* means either piety or pity.

ll. 106 ff. Aristotle had remarked that deeds performed through fear proceed from a mingling of the voluntary and the involuntary. There are two kinds of will, the absolute, which does not, and the conditioned which does consent to evil. St. Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa* defines the conditioned will as that which consents for the avoidance of greater evil.

ll. 115 ff. Now the poet speaks.

l. 122. Note the 'your'. But to a being really Divine 'thou (thy)'. Compare St. Bernard's prayer to the Virgin Mary (final Canto). So, after Beatrice has taken her place among the sainted, Dante in prayer to her reverts to the intimate form of speech appropriate to communings with the divine (*Par.* xxxi. 79-90).

ll. 130-2. 'With me, faith means perpetual unbelief
Kept quiet like the snake 'neath Michael's foot,
Who stands calm just because he feels it writhe.'
Browning's *Bishop Blougram*.)

And from an elder poet:

'You see, oft shaking of the cedar-tree
Fastens it more at root.'

Duchess of Malfi, I. i. 270.

l. 136. Can good deeds make amends for broken vows?

CANTO QUINTO

- 1 'S'io ti fiammeggio nel caldo d'amore
di là dal modo che in terra si vede,
sì che degli occhi tuoi vinco il valore,
4 Non ti maravigliar; chè ciò procede
da perfetto veder, che come apprende,
così nel bene appreso move il piede.
7 Io veggio ben sì come già risplende
nello intelletto tuo l'eterna luce,
che, vista sola, sempre amore accende;
10 E s'altra cosa vostro amor seduce,
non è, se non di quella alcun vestigio
mal conosciuto, che quivi traluce.
13 Tu vuoi saper, se con altro servigio,
per manco voto, si può render tanto,
che l'anima sicuri di litigio.
16 Sì cominciò Beatrice questo canto;
e sì com' uom che suo parlar non spezza,
continuò così il processo santo:
19 'Lo maggior don che Dio per sua larghezza
fesse creando, ed alla sua bontate
più conformato, e quel ch'ei più apprezza,
22 Fu della volontà la libertate,
di che le creature intelligenti,
e tutte e sole furo e son dotate.
25 Or ti parrà, se tu quinci argomenti,
l'alto valor del voto, s'è sì fatto
che Dio consenta quando tu consenti;
28 Chè nel fermar tra Dio e l'uomo il patto,
vittima fassi di questo tesoro,
tal qual io dico, e fassi col suo atto.
31 Dunque che render puossi per ristoro?
Se credi bene usar quel ch'hai offerto,
di mal tolletto vuoi far buon lavoro.
34 Tu se' omai del maggior punto certo;
ma perchè santa Chiesa in ciò dispensa,
che par contra lo ver ch'io t'ho scoperto,

CANTO V

Vows and Free Will; Ascent to the Heaven of Mercury

- 1 'If in the warmth of love on thee I beam
so beyond earthly mode as must defeat
the valour of thine eyes, be this no theme
- 4 For wonder, since it issues from complete
vision divine, which in the Good whereof
it has attained perception, moves its feet.
- 7 I see how shines already from above
into thine intellect the Eternal Light
that needs but to be seen to kindle love;
- 10 And if some other thing your love delight,
naught is it but some vestige of that same
effulgence, comprehended not aright.
- 13 Thou askest whether men for vows they maim
may pay such other service as to gain
exemption of the soul from any claim?'
- 16 So Beatrice began this further strain;
and even as one discoursing, who would not
break off, took up the holy theme again:
- 19 'The gift most precious to Creative Thought,
most signal of God's bounties, and the one
after the pattern of his goodness wrought,
- 22 Was Freedom of the Will,—a benison
wherewith all creatures of intelligence
both were and are endowed, and they alone.
- 25 Now will appear to thee by inference
the high worth of the vow so framed, supposing
that with thine own consenting, God consents;
- 28 For, between God and man the bargain closing,
of what I call this treasure an oblation
is made in sooth, made by its own proposing.
- 31 What may be offered then in compensation?
Weening to use well what thou offeredest,
thou seekest for thy plunder consecration.
- 34 Now art thou assured concerning the main quest:
but since herein doth Holy Church acquit,
which seems against the truth I manifest,

- 37 Convienti ancor sedere un poco a mensa,
perocchè il cibo rigido ch'hai preso
richiede ancora aiuto a tua dispensa.
- 40 Apri la mente a quel ch'io ti paleso,
e fermalvi entro; chè non fa scienza,
senza lo ritenere, avere inteso.
- 43 Due cose si convengono all'essenza
di questo sacrificio: l'una è quella
di che si fa, l'altra è la convenenza.
- 46 Quest'ultima giammai non si cancella,
se non servata, ed intorno di lei
sì preciso di sopra si favella;
- 49 Però necessità fu agli Ebrei
pur l'offerere, ancor che alcuna offerta
si permutasse, come saper dei.
- 52 L'altra, che per materia t'è aperta,
puote bene esser tal che non si falla
se con altra materia si converta.
- 55 Ma non trasmuti carco alla sua spalla
per suo arbitrio alcun, senza la volta
e della chiave bianca e della gialla;
- 58 Ed ogni permutanza creda stolta,
se la cosa dimessa in la sorpresa,
come il quattro nel sci, non è raccolta.
- 61 Però qualunque cosa tanto pesa
per suo valor, che tragga ogni bilancia,
satisfar non si può con altra spesa.
- 64 Non prendan li mortali il voto a ciancia:
siate fedeli, ed a ciò far non bieci,
come Jeptè alla sua prima mancia;
- 67 Cui più si convenia dicer: "Mal feci,"
che servando far peggio; e così stolto
ritrovar puoi lo gran duca dei Greci,
- 70 Onde pianse Ifigenia il suo bel volto,
e fe' pianger di sè li folli e i savi,
ch'udir parlar di così fatto colto.
- 73 Siate, Cristiani, a movervi più gravi,
non siate come penna ad ogni vento,
e non crediate ch'ogni acqua vi lavi.

- 37 Thou canst not choose but still at table sit
awhile, for the tough viand thou hast chewed
wants further aid for thy digesting it.
- 40 Take what I tell thee in receptive mood
and hold it fast; it is the very vice
of wit to lose what has been understood.
- 43 Pertain to essence of this sacrifice
two elements: one what it treats about,
the other from the covenant takes rise.
- 46 The latter never can be cancelled out
save by fulfillment; and already so
I spoke about it as to banish doubt;
- 49 Hence had the Hebrews still to offer, though
something whereof the sacrifice was made
might be commuted, as thou shouldest know.
- 52 The former, which as matter I portrayed,
may well be such that no offence is done
if with some other matter counterweighed.
- 55 But willfully let on his shoulder none
shift burden, without sanction of the Power
that turns the white key and the yellow one.
- 58 And folly all commuting deem, before
the thing remitted in the thing ye essay
shall be contained, as in the six the four.
- 61 Therefore whatever by its worth may weigh
so much as can make every balance swing,
can never be redeemed with other pay.
- 64 Let men deem not the vow a trifling thing:
be loyal, and in being so not blind
as Jephthah was in his first offering,
- 67 Who did worse honouring the vow unkind,
but should have said: "I sinned"; like foolish plight
the mighty leader of the Greeks entwined,
- 70 Whence rued Iphigenia her beauty bright,
and made for her both wise and simple rue,
so many as hear report of such a rite!
- 73 Christians, be graver in your moving; do
not featherlike to every wind consent,
and ween not every water washes you.

- 76 Avete il vecchio e il nuovo Testamento,
e il pastor della Chiesa che vi guida:
questo vi basti a vostro salvamento.
- 79 Se mala cupidigia altro vi grida,
uomini siate, e non pecore matte,
sì che il Giudeo di voi tra voi non rida.
- 82 Non fate come agnel che lascia il latte
della sua madre, e semplice e lascivo
seco medesimo a suo piacer combatte.'
- 85 Così Beatrice a me, com'io scrivo;
poi si rivolse tutta disiante
a quella parte ove il mondo è più vivo.
- 88 Lo suo tacere e il trasmutar sembiante
poser silenzio al mio cupido ingegno,
che già nuove questioni avea davante.
- 91 E sì come saetta, che nel segno
percote pria che sia la corda queta,
così corremmo nel secondo regno.
- 94 Quivi la Donna mia vid'io sì lieta,
come nel lume di quel ciel si mise,
che più lucente se ne fe' il pianeta.
- 97 E se la stella si cambiò e rise,
qual mi fec'io, che pur di mia natura
trasmutabile son per tutte guise!
- 100 Come in peschiera, ch'è tranquilla e pura,
traggoni i pesci a ciò che vien di fuori
per modo che lo stimin lor pastura;
- 103 Sì vid'io ben più di mille splendori
trarsi ver noi, ed in ciascun s'udia:
'Ecco chi crescerà li nostri amori.'
- 106 E sì come ciascuno a noi venia,
vedeasi l'ombra piena di letizia
nel fulgor chiaro che da lei uscia.
- 109 Pensa, lettor, se quel che qui s'inizia
non procedesse, come tu avresti
di più sapere angosciosa carizia;
- 112 E per te vederai, come da questi
m'era in disio d'udir lor condizioni,
sì come agli occhi mi fur manifesti.

- 76 Ye have the Old and the New Testament,
the Shepherd of the Church to shape your aim:
therewith for your salvation be content.
- 79 If sorry greed aught else to you proclaim,
be men, and be not silly sheep, that so
the Jew among you laugh you not to shame.
- 82 Behave not like the lamb who doth forgo
the mother's milk, and wantonly delight
in making of himself a mimic foe.'
- 85 Thus Beatrice to me, just as I write;
then all in longing up to that expanse
where most the world is quickened, turned her sight.
- 88 Her silence and transfigured countenance
imposed like silence on my eager wit,
though ready with new questions to advance.
- 91 And as the mark is by the arrow smit
before the cord forgets to quiver, thus
into the Second Kingdom did we flit.
- 94 I saw my Lady there so rapturous
as to the lustre of that heaven she drew
that even the planet grew more luminous.
- 97 And if the laughing star was altered too,
what then became I, by my native mood
ever susceptible to something new!
- 100 As in clear pool where the still fishes brood,
aught dropping in impels the finny drove
to dart toward it, deeming it their food,
- 103 So saw I there a thousand splendours move
to meet our coming, and every one was hymning:
'Behold one who will multiply our love.'
- 106 And every shade of them, now nearer swimming,
appeared as with effulgent glory fraught
streaming out of its rapture overbrimming.
- 109 If what is here begun proceeded not,
think, Reader, what an agonizing dearth
of knowing more would be within thee wrought;
- 112 And from thyself infer how these gave birth
to yearning in me to hear each circumstance
concerning them, when they revealed their worth.

- 115 'O bene nato, a cui veder li troni
del trionfo eternal concede grazia,
prima che la milizia s' abbandoni,
118 Del lume che per tutto il ciel si spazia
noi semo accesi: e però, se disii
da noi chiarirti, a tuo piacer ti sazia.'
- 121 Così da un di quegli spirti pii
detto mi fu; e da Beatrice: 'Di', di'
sicuramente, e credi come a Dii.'
- 124 'Io veggio ben sì come tu t' annidi
nel proprio lume, e che dagli occhi il traggi,
perch' ei corruscan, sì come tu ridi;
127 Ma non so chi tu sei, nè perchè aggi,
anima degna, il grado della spera,
che si vela ai mortal con altrui raggi.'
- 130 Questo diss' io diritto alla lumiera
che pria m' avea parlato, ond' ella fessi
lucente più assai di quel ch' ell' era.
- 133 Sì come il sol, che si cела egli stessi
per troppa luce, come il caldo ha rose
le temperanze dei vapori spessi;
- 136 Per più letizia sì mi si nascose
dentro al suo raggio la figura santa,
e così chiusa chiusa mi rispose
- 139 Nel modo che il seguente canto canta.

- 115 'O happy-born, whom sovereign Grace thus grants
to see the thrones triumphant and eterne
ere thou abandonest thy militance,
- 118 By light that ranges through all heaven we burn
enkindled so; and therefore, if thou please,
content thy heart with light from out our urn.'
- 121 One of the souls devout spoke words like these
to me; and Beatrice: 'Speak, speak out free
and trust to them as to divinities.'
- 124 'Well I perceive how thou art nesting thee
in thine own light, and drawing it again
through eyes that coruscate so laughingly.
- 127 But who thou art, blest soul, I cannot ken,
nor wherefore thou art graded in the sphere
that is in alien radiance veiled to men.'
- 130 Thus spoke I straight toward the lustre fair
that first addressed me; whereupon it grew
by far more radiant than it was whilere.
- 133 Then like the sun concealing himself through
excess of light, when heat has gnawed away
the tempering shade to heavy vapours due,
- 136 Concealed himself from me in his own ray
the holy shape for very jubilance;
and, thus fast folded, did in answer say
- 139 In fashion as the following canto chants.

NOTES

ll. 1-12. The light of Beatrice, an emanation of Divine Love increasingly bright as we rise toward God, beats down at first and blinds the weak eyes of flesh, to which it must in mercy be tempered; as the face of Moses, for its intolerable radiance, had to be veiled to his purblind people, when he came down the mountain after he had talked with the Most High.

ll. 13 ff. All readers of history must have noticed how common in the Middle Ages and even later is that transaction between man and saint or divinity known as the Vow. The votary, in return for some immediate help or favour, solemnly promises some great future concession or sacrifice. Permanent foundations of churches, chapels, hospitals, convents, colleges, crosses, and other monuments were frequently the result of vows on the part of the rich and powerful. A vow of celibacy and its final nullification is the central feature of the plot of the most celebrated of Italian prose romances, Manzoni's *I Promessi Sposi* (the Betrothed). Dante's treatment of the subject is a good example of his ethical soundness.

ll. 28 ff. The vow sacrifices the will, for which, as it is the most precious of possessions, nothing else can be substituted.

If, after the will has sacrificed itself by its own act, you revoke the gift, you by so doing become a thief who seeks to atone by making good use of ill-gotten treasure.

l. 43. Two elements of the vow: first, the thing pledged (e.g., money, some treasured object, refraining from some indulgence); secondly, the pledge or covenant itself, involving the renouncement of self-will.

l. 57. Cf. *Purgatorio* ix. 117.

ll. 67 ff. Cases of Jephthah and Agamemnon. For the case of Jephthah, see Judges xi. 29 to end. The tale of the noble Iphigenia echoes through all our poetry from Euripides to Goethe and Tennyson; but Dante seems to have known it chiefly from Tully's *Offices* (Cicero, *De off.*, iii. xxv). It is interesting to note the agreement of Dante and Cicero that such a vow would be 'More honoured in the breach than the observance'.

ll. 86-7. That happy age could still look beyond the remotest stars to a quickening fountain of life!

ll. 91 ff. Slipping into the Heaven of Mercury. This image of the bowshot to indicate the rapid smooth flight to the prime star is here repeated with an unforgettable addition. Cf. Canto ii, ll. 23-30.

ll. 97-9. The joy of Beatrice brightens the sphere on her arrival; if the star suffers a laughing change, how much more the mercurial nature of man and poet!

l. 105. Torraca sees here an allusion to Dante's mission in writing his Divine Poem: to increase man's love for the Supreme Good, 'our love' being the love of others for us. As they are perfect beings, our love for them will be the measure of our love of perfection. Cf. *Purgatorio* xxxi. 22 (note on frequent use of this *objective genitive*).

l. 110. The Reader thus addressed is one of those invited, at the beginning of Canto ii, to follow in the wake of the singing keel. Some there are who would have suffered a more painful dearth through the loss of the sequent Cantos (had the Poet really broken off here) than through the loss of all the ephemeral literature for the printing of which our forests are being converted into paper.

l. 115. Dante is accosted by a spirit.

l. 124. The Poet does speak.

l. 139. This mode of introducing the next Canto is unique in the Poem, as the Canto thus introduced is itself unique in being from beginning to end the speech of one person.

CANTO SESTO

- 1 'Posciachè Constantin l'aquila volse
 contra il corso del ciel, ch'ella seguio
 dietro all'antico che Lavina tolse,
4 Cento e cent'anni e più l'uccel di Dio
 nell'estremo d'Europa si ritenne,
 vicino ai monti de' quai prima uscìo;
7 E sotto l'ombra delle sacre penne
 governò il mondo lì di mano in mano,
 e sì cangiando in sulla mia pervenne.
10 Cesare fui, e son Giustiniano,
 che, per voler del primo amor ch'io sento,
 d'entro le leggi trassi il troppo e il vano;
13 E prima ch'io all'opra fossi attento,
 una natura in Cristo esser, non piùè,
 credeva, e di tal fede era contento;
16 Ma il benedetto Agapito, che fue
 sommo pastore, alla fede sincera
 mi dirizzò con le parole sue.
19 Io gli credetti, e ciò che in sua fede era
 veggio ora chiaro, sì come tu vedi
 ogni contraddizion e falsa e vera.
22 Tosto che con la chiesa mossi i piedi,
 a Dio per grazia piacque di spirarmi
 l'alto lavoro, e tutto a lui mi diedi.
25 Ed al mio Bellisar commendai l'armi,
 cui la destra del ciel fu sì congiunta,
 che segno fu ch'io dovessi posarmi.
28 Or qui alla question prima s'appunta
 la mia risposta; ma sua condizione
 mi stringe a seguitare alcuna giunta;
31 Perchè tu veggi con quanta ragione.
 sì move contra il sacrosanto segno,
 e chi 'l s'appropria, e chi a lui s'opponne.
34 Vedi quanta virtù l'ha fatto degno
 di riverenza.' E cominciò dall'ora
 che Pallante morì per dargli regno.

CANTO VI

The Function of Rome in Human Redemption

- 1 'When Constantine had wheeled the Eagle away
against Heaven's course, where it was following
that ancient who espoused Lavinia,
4 Two centuries and more saw hovering
the Bird of God at Europe's border line,
near to the mountains whence it first took wing;
7 And, overshadowing with wings divine,
governed from hand to hand the world of man,
and in due turn alighted upon mine.
10 Caesar was I, and am Justinian,
who, to the primal Love obedient,
winnowed the laws, and bolted to the bran.
13 And ere yet wholly on that labour bent
did I a single nature in Christ misdeem,
not more, and with such faith remained content;
16 But blessed Agapetus, the supreme
shepherd of souls, directed me and drew
to the pure faith, discoursing of the theme.
19 Him I believed, and what by faith he knew
now clearly see, as seest thou every pair
of contradictories both false and true.
22 When with the Church my footsteps moving were,
I gave me single-minded to the laws,
inspired by Grace Divine to that high care;
25 Committing weapons in the imperial cause
to Belisarius mine, so comforted
by Heaven's right hand that I had leave to pause.
28 Here then to thy first question comes to head
my answer; but its terms make apposite
that something as a sequel should be said,
31 That thou mayest see with what amount of right
against the hallowed ensign move both they
who make it theirs and who against it fight.
34 Think what large reverence we ought to pay
its prowess, starting from the moment when
died Pallas to secure it sovereign sway.

- 37 'Tu sai che fece in Alba sua dimora
per trecent' anni ed oltre, infino al fine
che i tre ai tre pugnar per lui ancora.
- 40 E sai ch' ei fe' dal mal delle Sabine
al dolor di Lucrezia in sette regi,
vincendo intorno le genti vicine.
- 43 Sai quel ch' ei fe', portato dagli egregi
Romani incontro a Brenno, incontro a Pirro,
e contra gli altri principi e collegi:
- 46 Onde Torquato, e Quinzio che dal cirro
negletto fu nomato, i Deci, e' Fabi
ebber la fama che volontier mirro.
- 49 Esso atterrò l' orgoglio degli Arabi,
che diretto ad Annibale passaro
l' alpestre rocce, Po, di che tu labi.
- 52 Sott' esso giovinetti trionfaro
Scipione e Pompeo, ed a quel colle
sotto il qual tu nascesti, parve amaro.
- 55 Poi, presso al tempo che tutto ciel volle
ridur lo mondo a suo modo sereno,
Cesare per voler di Roma il tolle:
- 58 E quel che fe' da Varo infino al Reno,
Isara vide ed Era, e vide Senna,
ed ogni valle onde Rodano è pieno.
- 61 Quel che fe' poi ch' egli uscì di Ravenna,
e saltò Rubicon, fu di tal volo
che nol seguiteria lingua nè penna.
- 64 In ver la Spagna rivolse lo stuolo;
poi ver Durazzo, e Farsalia percosse
sì ch' al Nil caldo si sentì del duolo.
- 67 Antandro e Simoenta, onde si mosse,
rivide, e là dov' Ettore si cuba,
e mal per Tolommeo poi si riscosse:
- 70 Da indi scese folgorando a Juba;
poscia si volse nel vostro occidente,
dove sentia la Pompeiana tuba.
- 73 Di quel ch' ei fe' col baiulo seguente,
Bruto con Cassio nello inferno latra,
e Modena e Perugia fe' dolente.

- 37 In Alba 'twas, thou knowest, a denizen
three hundred years and more, until the close
when fought the three to three for it again.
- 40 From Sabine rape down to Lucretia's woes
thou knowest how with seven kings it went
subduing round about the neighbour foes.
- 43 Thou knowest how, borne by Romans eminent,
'gainst Brennus, against Pyrrhus it o'ercame,
and against others, prince or government;
- 46 Torquatus, and that Quintius who took name
from hair unkempt, Decii and Fabii so
wrought deeds that gladly I embalm their fame.
- 49 It laid the pride of the Arabians low,
who passed in train of Hannibal among
the rocky Alpine peaks whence pours the Po.
- 52 It led to triumph while they yet were young
Pompey and Scipio, and bitterly
wrought to that hill beneath which thou art sprung.
- 55 Then near the time when heavenly harmony
would tune the world to concord with its own,
Caesar laid hold of it at Rome's decree;
- 58 And what it wrought from Var to Rhine is known
to Isère, to the Saone, and to the Seine,
and every valley brimming up the Rhone.
- 61 Its prowess, issuing from Ravenna, when
it leapt the Rubicon, so swiftly flew
that follow it could neither tongue nor pen.
- 64 It wheeled the legions back to Spain; then threw
them on Durazzo; and smote Pharsalia
so that to torrid Nile was felt the rue.
- 67 Antandros and the Simois it saw,
its starting-point, where Hector sleeps so fast;
then, woe to Ptolemy, roused beak and claw;
- 70 Thence fell, like thunderbolt on Juba cast;
then wheeling back into your West it came
on hearing the Pompeian trumpet-blast.
- 73 What the next bearer with it did, proclaim
Brutus and Cassius in the hellish deep,
and Modena and Perugia wail the same.

- 76 Piangene ancor la trista Cleopatra,
che, fuggendogli innanzi, dal colubro
la morte prese subitana ed atra.
- 79 Con costui corse infino al lito rubro;
con costui pose il mondo in tanta pace,
che fu serrato a Jano il suo delubro.
- 82 Ma ciò che il segno che parlar mi face
fatto avea prima, e poi era fatturo
per lo regno mortal, ch' a lui soggiace,
- 85 Diventa in apparenza poco e scuro,
se in mano al terzo Cesare si mira
con occhio chiaro e con affetto puro;
- 88 Chè la viva giustizia che mi spira
gli concedette, in mano a quel ch' io dico,
gloria di far vendetta alla sua ira.
- 91 Or qui t' ammira in ciò ch' io ti replico:
poscia con Tito a far vendetta corse
della vendetta del peccato antico.
- 94 E quando il dente Longobardo morse
la santa Chiesa, sotto alle sue ali
Carlo Magno, vincendo, la soccorse.
- 97 Omai puoi giudicar di quei cotali
ch' io accusai di sopra, e di lor falli,
che son cagion di tutti vostri mali.
- 100 L' uno al pubblico segno i gigli gialli
oppone, e l' altro appropria quello a parte,
sì ch' è forte a veder chi più si falli.
- 103 Faccian li Ghibellin, faccian lor arte
sott' altro segno; chè mal segue quello
sempre chi la giustizia e lui diparte:
- 106 E non l' abbatta esto Carlo novello
coi Guelfi suoi, ma tema degli artigli
ch' a più alto leon trasser lo vello.
- 109 Molte fiate già pianser li figli
per la colpa del padre, e non si creda
che Dio trasmuti l' armi per suoi gigli.
- 112 Questa picciola stella si correda
dei buoni spirti, che son stati attivi
perchè onore e fama li succeda;

- 76 Ever doth wretched Cleopatra weep
because of it,—she, fleeing on before,
took from the adder suddenly black sleep.
- 79 With him it coursed far as the Red-sea shore;
with him composed the world in peace so great
that barred on Janus was his temple door.
- 82 But what the standard that I celebrate
had done before and was about to do
for mortal man in every subject state,
- 85 Dwindles away, beclouded to the view,
if one in hand of the third Caesar seek
with vision clear and with affection true;
- 88 For Living Justice, moving me to speak,
gave it, in person of that emperor,
the glory vengeance for just wrath to wreak.
- 91 Now marvel here at what I tell thee more:
later it flew with Titus, doing again
vengeance on vengeance for the sin of yore.
- 94 And after, when the Lombard fang would fain
bite Holy Church, to rescue her from foes
beneath those wings came conquering Charlemagne.
- 97 Now then thou mayest judge of such as those
whom I before accused, and of their faults
which are the origin of all your woes.
- 100 Against the public ensign one exalts
the yellow lilies; another this assigns
to party,—hard to say who most is false.
- 103 Under another ensign Ghibellines
may ply and ply devices,—for amiss
he follows it who from justice discombines.
- 106 And let that younger Charles not trample this,
he and his Guelfs, but fear the claws that wield
force to flay tougher lion-fell than his.
- 109 Children have oft bewailed by flood and field
the father's fault, nor let him ever ween
his lilies to be quartered in God's shield.
- 112 This little planet is made passing sheen
with the good spirits who have striven that fame
and honour follow them; whenever lean

- 115 E quando li disiri poggian quivi
sì disviando, pur convien che i raggi
del vero amore in su poggin men vivi.
- 118 Ma nel commensurar dei nostri gaggi
col merto, è parte di nostra letizia,
perchè non li vedem minor nè maggi.
- 121 Quindi addolcisce la viva giustizia
in noi l' affetto sì, che non si puote
torcer giammai ad alcuna nequizia.
- 124 Diverse voci fan giù dolci note;
così diversi scanni in nostra vita
rendon dolce armonia tra queste rote.
- 127 E dentro alla presente margarita
luce la luce di Romeo, di cui
fu l' opra bella e grande mal gradita.
- 130 Ma i Provenzali che fer contra lui
non hanno riso, e però mal cammina
qual si fa danno del ben fare altrui.
- 133 Quattro figlie ebbe, e ciascuna regina,
Ramondo Beringhieri, e ciò gli fece
Romeo persona umile e peregrina;
- 136 E poi il mosser le parole bieche
a domandar ragione a questo giusto,
che gli assegnò sette e cinque per diece.
- 139 Indi partissi povero e vetusto;
e se il mondo sapesse il cor ch' egli ebbe
mendicando sua vita a frusto a frusto,
- 142 Assai lo loda, e più lo loderebbe.'

- 115 The truant wishes toward such an aim,
then true affection needs must radiate
upward to Heaven less vividly aflame.
- 118 But that our guerdon is commensurate
with worth, is part of our beatitude,
seeing it nor too little nor too great.
- 121 Whence Living Justice sweetens so the mood
of love in us that no perversity
can tangle it in any turpitude.
- 124 Voices diverse below make melody;
so in this life of ours each various grade
renders among these wheels sweet harmony.
- 127 And from within the present pearl is rayed
the light of Romeo, whose labours great
and generous were shabbily repaid.
- 130 But those of Provence cannot gratulate
who wrought against that noble minister:
evil to them who other's good abate!
- 133 Four daughters, Queens, had Raymond Berenger,
and he who crowned them was no citizen
but Romeo, a lowly pilgrimer.
- 136 By crooked counsel moved, the Master then
calls to account the servant just, who clears
his credit,—seven and five for every ten.
- 139 Then he departed poor and stricken in years;
but if the world could know the heart he bore
begging his bread and eating it with tears,
- 142 Much as it praises, it would praise him more.'

NOTES

The soul of Justinian the lawgiver is made the mouthpiece of a philosophy of history. The Eagle, which had followed Aeneas from Troy to Italy, is made by Constantine to wheel eastward again to Byzantium, not far from the mountains of the Troad (Ida), its original haunt.

ll. 10 ff. Conversion and work of Justinian. With line 10, cf. *Purgatorio* v. 88: 'Io fui di Montefeltro; io son Bonconte', and the humility of the soul of him who had been Pope Adrian V (close of *Purgatorio* xix). The little brief authority, in which they here were dressed, counts for nothing over there.

l. 12. Through the codification of the laws made under his direction, 'the public reason of the Romans' (as Gibbon says) has been transfused into the institutions of the modern world.

ll. 13-21. Theodora, wife of Justinian over whom her ascendancy was all but complete, was an ardent adherent of the Monophysite wing of the Christian communion, while he (at least during her lifetime) appears to have been orthodox. She shared the throne with him and, although religion was then literally a *burning* question, their harmony was unbroken. Brunetto Latini makes the statement about Justinian's conversion to orthodoxy, and his *Trésor* is presumably Dante's authority here.

ll. 31 ff. Victorious flight of the Roman Eagle from the time of Aeneas on. The story is recounted for the purpose of the practical application made toward the close of the Canto. The Ghibellines, who make the public ensign a party badge, the Guelfs who set against it the *fleurs de lis* of France, are both condemned.

l. 36. The heroic death of young Prince Pallas ('owing nothing now to any of the gods') is told in the *Aeneid* (see Bk. x and beginning of Bk. xi). As to the following fifty lines, it would be pedantic and therefore impertinent to stuff these notes with a hundred glosses historic, biographic, geographic, mythologic.

l. 73. Augustus.

l. 81. With the shutting in of Janus, we may pause for breath; indeed this is the great pause of history:

'No war or battle's sound

Was heard the world around; . . .

And kings sate still with awful eye

As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.'

It is instructive to compare this poetical survey of Roman history with that made by Virgil in his description of the shield of Aeneas (*Aeneid*, viii, last 106 lines). Virgil's survey is scenic, processional, stately like a triumph; selecting a small number of scenes, he dwells upon each in turn. Dante, on the other hand, darts across the landscape of history like a meteor; no sooner is the eye caught by a scene than another and another swim into ken. The adjectives are factual rather than ornamental: the Nile is 'torrid'; Cleopatra is taken by 'sudden and black death'; the Poet is well aware that the nouns and verbs are descriptive enough to those who know; others will not be helped to see by any number of adjectives and figures of speech.

l. 86. Tiberius.

ll. 88-93. The Eagle executes Divine Justice for man's sin, and does vengeance on the Jews.

ll. 94-6. When and how, during the two centuries between the death of Justinian and the conquest of the Lombard kingdom by Charlemagne, the Empire was transferred to the west again is not explained. In fact there was no such westward course of empire; the successors of Justinian still ruled at Byzantium, and the Byzantine Empire was yet to continue for centuries. But the coronation of Charlemagne at the end of the ninth century by the Pope of Rome powerfully impressed all western Europeans, and that impression, deepened by the downfall of the exarchate, the abandonment of Italy by the eastern garrisons, and other circumstances, led willing minds to yield to the colossal delusion of the Holy Roman Empire.

ll. 97-111. Application of the lesson to Dante's time (cf. ll. 29-33). This condemnation of both parties is the more solemn as coming from the mouth of a blessed spirit who on earth had been (as was rightly or wrongly thought) the greatest lawgiver since Moses. In this survey, as in that more personal and impassioned one in *Purgatorio* vi, Dante appears, in his own dimensions like himself, a *national* poet.

l. 106. Charles II of the Angevin dynasty in Naples and Apulia: 'young' (*novello*) to distinguish him from his father. He was much older than Dante, who frequently mentions him, never very favourably.

l. 113. 'That last infirmity of noble mind'.

l. 127 to end. The four daughters of this great Count of Provence are Margaret, married to Louis IX of France (Saint Louis); Eleanor to Henry III of England; Sancha to Richard Cornwall, 'King of the Romans'; Beatrice to Charles of Anjou founder of the French Kingdom of Naples. Through this

marriage of Beatrice, Provence came to be united to France (cf. *Purg.* xx. 61).

This pathetic legend of Romeo, minister of Count Berenger of Provence, affords the poetic relief that Dante is in the habit of giving after his intenser moods and loftier flights. In the tale there is admixture of truth and fiction; those who care most for historical accuracy may consult Toynbee; here we are concerned chiefly with poetic and human values. No sympathetic reader can help thinking of the exiled and wandering Poet under the figure or parable of the disgraced official. 'Through almost all regions where this language is spoken have I gone a pilgrim, almost a beggar, displaying against my will the injury of Fortune, for which the injured one is many times unjustly held to blame' (*Banquet* or *Convivio*, I. iii). The last three lines are on the part of the proudest of poets a touching appeal for sympathetic comprehension,—so much more desirable than fame, and alas! perhaps even rarer.

Canto Settimo

CANTO SETTIMO

- 1 *Osanna sanctus Deus Sabaoth,*
superillustrans claritate tua
felices ignes horum malachoth!
- 4 Così, volgendosi alla nota sua,
fu viso a me cantare essa sustanza,
sopra la qual doppio lume s'addua:
- 7 Ed essa e l'altre mossero a sua danza,
e quasi velocissime faville,
mi si velar di subita distanza.
- 10 Io dubitava, e dicea: 'Dille, dille,'
fra me, 'dille,' diceva, 'alla mia donna
che mi disseta con le dolci stille';
- 13 Ma quella riverenza che s'indonna
di tutto me, pur per BE e per ICE,
mi richinava come l'uom ch'assonna.
- 16 Poco sofferse me cotal Beatrice,
e cominciò, raggiandomi d'un riso
tal, che nel foco faria l'uom felice:
- 19 'Secondo mio infallibile avviso,
come giusta vendetta giustamente
vengiata fosse, t'ha in pensier miso;
- 22 Ma io ti solverò tosto la mente:
e tu ascolta, chè le mie parole
di gran sentenza ti faran presente.
- 25 Per non soffrire alla virtù che vuole
freno a suo prode, quell'uom che non nacque,
dannando sè, dannò tutta sua prole;
- 28 Onde l'umana specie inferma giacque
giù per secoli molti in grande errore,
fin ch'al Verbo di Dio di scender piacque,
- 31 U' la natura, che dal suo Fattore
s'era allungata, unio a sè in persona
con l'atto sol del suo eterno amore.
- 34 Or drizza il viso a quel ch'or si ragiona:
questa natura al suo Fattore unita,
qual fu creata, fu sincera e buona;

CANTO VII

Mystery of the Redemption

- 1 *Hosannah, holy God of Hosts, Thou who
 dost all the blessed fires that are burning
 within the Kingdom with Thy light outdo!*
 4 Even so, in time to its own music turning,
 that being on whom two splendours form a crest,
 chanted, as well I saw, the while discerning
 7 How he began to dance with all the rest,
 and like swift sparklets with velocity
 and sudden distance veiled them from my quest.
 10 In doubt I was repeating inwardly:
 'Tell it, tell it, tell to my Lady, whose
 distilments are so sweetly slaking me;'
 13 But reverence, whereby I cannot choose
 but mastered be at sound of 'Be' or 'Iss',
 bowed me like one who falls into a doze.
 16 But little while so left me Beatrice
 till, with a radiant smile of such a kind
 as would have put a burning man in bliss,
 19 She said: 'By my unfailing sight I find
 the question how a vengeance that was just
 could justly be avenged, perturbs thy mind;
 22 But if I speed to thy release, so must
 thou listen well, because these words of mine
 will guerdon thee with reasoning august.
 25 By not submitting to a curb benign
 upon his power of will, that man ne'er born
 damning himself, condemned thus all his line,
 28 Whereby the human race below forlorn
 lay many a century in error great,
 until the Word Almighty did not scorn
 31 Going down to join in Person increate,
 by the sole act of His eternal love,
 that nature from its Maker alienate.
 34 Now turn thy look to what I reason of:
 this nature, which its Maker made His own,
 did, as created, pure and sinless prove;

- 37 Ma per sè stessa pur fu ella sbandita
di Paradiso, perocchè si torse
da via di verità e da sua vita.
- 40 La pena dunque che la croce porse,
s' alla natura assunta si misura,
nulla giammai sì giustamente morse;
- 43 E così nulla fu di tanta ingiura,
guardando alla persona che sofferse,
in che era contratta tal natura.
- 46 Però d' un atto uscir cose diverse;
ch' a Dio ed ai Giudei piacque una morte:
per lei tremò la terra e il ciel s' aperse.
- 49 Non ti dee oramai parer più forte,
quando si dice che giusta vendetta
poscia vengiata fu da giusta corte.
- 52 Ma io veggi' or la tua mente ristretta
di pensier in pensier dentro ad un nodo,
del qual con gran disio solver s' aspetta.
- 55 Tu dici: "Ben discerno ciò ch' i' odo;
ma perchè Dio volesse, m' è occulto,
a nostra redenzion pur questo modo."
- 58 Questo decreto, frate, sta sepulto
agli occhi di ciascuno, il cui ingegno
nella fiamma d' amor non è adulto.
- 61 Veramente, però ch' a questo segno
molto si mira, e poco si discerne,
dirò perchè tal modo fu più degno.
- 64 La divina bontà, che da sè sperne
ogni livore, ardendo in sè sfavilla
sì, che dispiega le bellezze eterne.
- 67 Ciò che da lei senza mezzo distilla
non ha poi fine, perchè non si move
la sua impronta, quand' ella sigilla.
- 70 Ciò che da essa senza mezzo piove
libero è tutto, perchè non soggiace
alla virtute delle cose nuove.
- 73 Più l' è conforme, e però più le piace;
chè l' ardor santo, ch' ogni cosa raggia,
nella più simigliante è più vivace.

- 37 But it was exiled by its fault alone
from Paradise, for that it wandering
from way of truth and life astray had gone.
- 40 Thus, by the adopted nature measuring,
the penalty upon the cross exacted
did never any yet so justly sting;
- 43 And likewise never was such wrong enacted,
considering Who suffered, and the worth
of Him to whom this nature was contracted.
- 46 Thus from one act diverse effects took birth;
the same death pleased the Hebrews and the Lord:
Heaven opened at the sight, and quaked the earth.
- 49 No longer deem then difficult the word
when it asseverates that vengeance just
was afterward avenged by a just sword.
- 52 But now I see how thought on thought is thrust
upon thy mind, entangled in a skein
whence it awaits release with eager trust.
- 55 Thou sayest within: "Yea, what I hear is plain,
but it is hidden from me why God chose
this only way our ransom to attain."
- 58 My brother, this decree from eyes of those
lies buried deep, whose wit is not mature
within the flame of love that ripening glows.
- 61 Nevertheless as at this cynosure
mortals long gaze, though little they discern,
will I declare why this way was the truer.
- 64 Bounty Divine, that doth all envy spurn
away from Him, sends burning sparks therefrom,
so lighting up the loveliness eterne.
- 67 That which distils without a medium
from Him, has then no end, for permanence
gives form and pressure where His seal has come.
- 70 That which rains down without a medium thence
is wholly free, since not beneath the bar
of changing secondary influence.
- 73 Things please Him most that in His likeness are,
for the all-irradiant sacred glow must be
most living in the things most similar.

- 76 Di tutte queste cose s'avvantaggia
l'umana creatura, e s'una manca,
di sua nobilità convien che caggia.
- 79 Solo il peccato è quel che la disfranca,
e falla dissimile al Sommo Bene,
perchè del lume suo poco s'imbianca;
- 82 Ed in sua dignità mai non riviene,
se non riempie dove colpa vota,
contra mal dilettrar con giuste pene.
- 85 Vostra natura, quando peccò *tota*
nel seme suo, da queste dignitadi,
come da Paradiso, fu remota;
- 88 Nè ricovrar poteasi, se tu badi
ben sottilmente, per alcuna via,
senza passar per l'un di questi guadi.
- 91 O che Dio solo per sua cortesia
dimesso avesse, o che l'uom per sè isso
avesse soddisfatto a sua follia.
- 94 Ficca mo l'occhio per entro l'abisso
dell'eterno consiglio, quanto puoi
al mio parlar distrettamente fisso.
- 97 Non potea l'uomo nei termini suoi
mai satisfacer, per non poter ir giuso
con umiltate, ubbidendo poi,
- 100 Quanto disubbidiendo intese ir suso;
e questa è la cagion per che l'uom fue
da poter satisfacer per sè dischiuso.
- 103 Dunque a Dio convenia con le vie sue
riparar l'uomo a sua intera vita,
dico con l'una, o ver con ambedue.
- 106 Ma perchè l'opra è tanto più gradita
dell'operante, quanto più appresenta
della bontà del core ond'è uscita;
- 109 La divina bontà, che il mondo imprenta,
di proceder per tutte le sue vie
a rilevarvi suso fu contenta;
- 112 Nè tra l'ultima notte e il primo die
sì alto e sì magnifico processo,
o per l'una o per l'altra fu o fie.

- 76 These coigns of vantage all humanity
inherits, and, if one of these it wants,
falls force perforce from its nobility.
- 79 Sin only is man's disinheritance,
rendering him unlike the Highest Good
and less blanched therefore by its radiance,
- 82 And never he gains his former altitude
except he fill the guilty void again,
just penalty for pleasure ill-pursued.
- 85 Your nature, sinning in your Sire amain,
from such advantages as these was barred
even as from Paradise; and such the stain
- 88 That in no manner could they be restored,
if thou with subtle wit the matter heed,
except by passing one or the other ford:
- 91 Either that God's sole clemency concede
redemption, or that human foolishness
should expiated be by human deed.
- 94 Now let thine eye pierce into the abyss
of the eternal counsel, close intent
as possible to my discourse of this.
- 97 Man could, within his finite limits pent,
never atone, his pinions downward weighing
with meekness and thereafter obedient,
- 100 Far as he planned to soar by disobeying;
and this is why, though man himself would pay
his own atonement, he was barred from paying.
- 103 Whence Deity must needs in His own way
bring man in perfect life again to birth,—
in one way, or indeed in both, I say.
- 106 But since the doer's deed is graced with worth
the more in measure as it more infers
the heart of bounty whence it issued forth,
- 109 Bounty Divine that stamps the universe,
was fain to put in force His every mode
to liberate you from the primal curse;
- 112 Nor was nor shall be, since the first day glowed
till the last night, so high and glorious
a progress on the one or the other road:

- 115 Chè più largo fu Dio a dar sè stesso,
a far l' uom sufficiente a rilevarsi,
che s' egli avesse sol da sè dimesso.
- 118 E tutti gli altri modi erano scarsi
alla giustizia, se il Figliuol di Dio
non fosse umiliato ad incarnarsi.
- 121 Or, per empierci bene ogni disio,
ritorno a dichiarare in alcun loco,
perchè tu veggi lì così com' io.
- 124 Tu dici: "Io veggio l' acqua, io veggio il foco,
l' aer, e la terra, e tutte lor misture
venire a corruzione, e durar poco,
- 127 E queste cose pur fur creature;"
perchè, se ciò ch' ho detto è stato vero,
esser dovrien da corruzion sicure. .
- 130 Gli Angeli, frate, e il paese sincero
nel qual tu sei, dir si posson creati,
sì come sono, in loro essere intero;
- 133 Ma gli elementi che tu hai nomati,
e quelle cose che di lor si fanno,
da creata virtù sono informati.
- 136 Creata fu la materia ch' egli hanno,
creata fu la virtù informante
in queste stelle, che intorno a lor vanno.
- 139 L' anima d' ogni bruto e delle piante
da complession potenziata tira
lo raggio e il moto delle luci sante.
- 142 Ma vostra vita senza mezzo spira
la somma beninanza, e la innamora
di sè, sì che poi sempre la disira.
- 145 E quindi puoi argomentare ancora
vostra resurrezion, se tu ripensi
come l' umana carne fessi allora,
- 148 Che li primi parenti intrambo fensi.'

- 115 For, giving Self, was God more bounteous,
so making man sufficient up to rise,
than if He simply had forgiven us;
118 Nor any other method might suffice
for justice, had the Son of the Most High
not humbled Him, assuming mortal guise.
121 And now, with all thy yearning to comply,
let me turn back to make one matter clear,
that we may see it together, eye to eye.
124 Thou sayest: "I see the water, I see the air,
the fire, the earth and all their mixtures stay
but little while, then to corruption fare,
127 Yet nothing but created things were they;"
wherefore, if what I have averred is sure,
they ought to be secure against decay.
130 The angels, brother, and the country pure
wherein thou art, may be called generated
in all their being, as they are, mature;
133 But the elements whose names thou hast related,
and all the things that from their minglings flow,
informed with power that was itself created.
136 Created was the matter in them so,
created the informing influence
within these stars that sweeping round them go.
139 Plucked out from their potential elements
by light and motion of the holy fires
are souls of every brute and of the plants.
142 But the Supreme Benignity inspires
your soul directly, and enamours her
with Him, whom she forever then desires.
145 And furthermore thou mayest hence infer
your resurrection, if thou think once more
how human frames divinely fashioned were
148 When our first parents both were framed of yore.'

NOTES

The terse and noble treatment of the familiar theme calls for but brief annotation. It can hardly be said that Milton's more diffuse handling of the scholastic argument in Paradise Lost is any improvement upon this 'reasoning august'.

l. 14. He reverences the very syllables of her name.

ll. 19 ff. With a reassuring smile Beatrice states the tremendous dilemma which his tongue could not utter, and then proceeds to solve the apparent antinomy. Cf. Canto vi, ll. 88-93.

ll. 25 ff. It is all very well to find some of the theological implications of the doctrine of original sin repugnant to our sense of justice, and to cry with Omar:

'O Thou who man of baser earth didst make
And even with Paradise devise the snake;'

but the fact remains that we do find the earth whereof we are made growing baser because of hereditary taint resultant upon ancestral false choices. Modern science perceives human society to be an infected tissue: few individuals quite normal and sane; crime a pathological symptom; legal and moral remedies merely palliative. Is there any human cure in sight? Perhaps, after all, some wholesome truth may lurk in the legend of the forbidden tree and the free choice from which springs infinite woe calling for infinite redemption!

l. 32. 'For God so loved the world.'

l. 41. The just penalty.

ll. 55-7. Why did not God let man ransom himself?

ll. 67 ff. That which distils from God is permanent, free and in the Divine likeness.

ll. 76-8. These coigns of vantage are freedom, life eternal, likeness to the Maker. By the fall man lost his freedom and Divine likeness, thus becoming subject to death.

ll. 97 ff. Why human atonement might not suffice.

ll. 103 ff. Necessity of the Incarnation. Line 105 simply anticipates, the two ways being justice and mercy.

ll. 121 ff. The rest is a descent to reasoning more scholastic and somewhat less august. The elements, animals, plants, being indirectly created, are transitory and corruptible. Man, even as to his body, being a direct creation of the Divine hand, is immortal. Hence the resurrection of the 'spiritual body' which was given to our first parents (cf. St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv).

ll. 133 ff. The elements not distilled directly from the Divine, but through the secondary influences of the stars.

ll. 143-6. 'Your', as always, is plural (referring here to mankind); while 'thou' is used in addressing the individual (here the man Dante).

CANTO OTTAVO

- 1 Solea creder lo mondo in suo periclo
che la bella Ciprigna il folle amore
raggiasse, volta nel terzo epiciclo;
4 Perchè non pure a lei facean onore
di sacrificio e di votivo grido
le genti antiche nell' antico errore;
7 Ma Dione onoravano e Cupido,
questa per madre sua, questo per figlio,
e dicean ch' ei sedette in grembo a Dido;
10 E da costei, ond' io principio piglio,
pigliavano il vocabol della stella
che il sol vagheggia or da coppa or da ciglio.
13 Io non m' accorsi del salire in ella;
ma d' esservi entro mi fece assai fede
la Donna mia, ch' io vidi far più bella.
16 E come in fiamma favilla si vede,
e come in voce voce si discerne,
quando una è ferma e l' altra va e riede;
19 Vid' io in essa luce altre lucerne
moversi in giro più e men correnti,
al modo, credo, di lor viste interne.
22 Di fredda nube non disceser venti,
o visibili o no, tanto festini,
che non paressero impediti e lenti
25 A chi avesse quei lumi divini
veduti a noi venir, lasciando il giro
pria cominciato in gli alti Serafini.
28 E dentro a quei che più innanzi appariro,
sonava *Osanna* sì che unque poi
di riudir non fui senza disiro.
31 Indi si fece l' un più presso a noi,
e solo incominciò: 'Tutti sem presti
al tuo piacer, perchè di noi ti gioi.
34 Noi ci volgiam coi principi celesti
d' un giro, e d' un girare, e d' una sete,
ai quali tu del mondo già dicesti:

CANTO VIII

The Heaven of Venus

- 1 The world was in its peril wont to hold
that the fair Cyprian was raying out
wild love, in her third epicycle rolled;
4 Wherefore the ancient people went about
in antique error, not alone to pay
to her the sacrifice and votive shout,
7 But Cupid and Dionë honoured they,
this as her mother, that one as her son,
telling how he in Dido's bosom lay;
10 And named from her with whom I have begun
that planetary star which, now at brow
and now behind the shoulder, woos the Sun.
13 I had no sense of rising there till now,
but of our being there my Lady's favour
gave proof, because I saw her fairer grow.
16 And as in flame we see the sparkles waver,
or as within a voice a voice discern
one holding note, one shaking out a quaver,
19 So in that radiance other torches burn
in circle speeding variably fast,
methinks in measure of their sight eterne.
22 Never from icy cloud so swift a blast
swept, seen or unseen, that the interim
would not have seemed long-drawn before it passed,
25 To one who should have seen approaching him
those lights divine as they forsook the gyre
begun among the lofty Seraphim.
28 And from among the foremost of that quire
rang forth *Hosannah*, so harmonious
that ever to rehear it I desire.
31 Then one of them drew near alone, and thus
began: 'We all with eagerness are burning
at thy good will to give thee joy of us.
34 Of one orb, of one circling, of one yearning
with the celestial Princes are we rolling
to whom once thou, from wordly matters turning;

- 37 *Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete;*
e sem sì pien d'amor che, per piacerti,
non fia men dolce un poco di quiete.'
- 40 Poscia che gli occhi miei si furo offerti
alla mia Donna riverenti, ed essa
fatti gli avea di sè contenti e certi,
- 43 Rivolversi alla luce, che promessa
tanto s'avea, e: 'Di' chi siete,' fue
la voce mia di grande affetto impressa.
- 46 E quanta e quale vid' io lei far piùe
per allegrezza nuova che s'accrebbe,
quand' io parlai, all' allegrezze sue!
- 49 Così fatta, mi disse: 'Il mondo m'ebbe
giù poco tempo; e se più fosse stato,
molto sarà di mal, che non sarebbe.
- 52 La mia letizia mi ti tien celato,
che mi raggia dintorno, e mi nasconde
quasi animal di sua seta fasciato.
- 55 Assai m'amasti, ed avesti bene onde;
chè, s'io fossi giù stato, io ti mostrava
di mio amor più oltre che le fronde.
- 58 Quella sinistra riva che si lava
di Rodano, poi ch'è misto con Sorga,
per suo signore a tempo m'aspettava:
- 61 E quel corno d'Ausonia, che s'imborga
di Bari, di Gaeta e di Catona,
da ove Tronto e Verde in mare sgorga.
- 64 Fulgeami già in fronte la corona
di quella terra che il Danubio riga
poi che le ripe tedesche abbandona;
- 67 E la bella Trinacria, che caliga
tra Pachino e Peloro, sopra il golfo
che riceve da Euro maggior briga,
- 70 Non per Tifeo, ma per nascente solfo,
attesi avrebbe li suoi regi ancora,
nati per me di Carlo e di Ridolfo,
- 73 Se mala signoria, che sempre accora
li popoli soggetti, non avesse
mosso Palermo a gridar: "Mora, mora."

- 37 "Ye the third Heaven by intellect controlling";
and to delight thee shall a quiet space
be no less sweet, our love is so ensouling.'
- 40 After mine eyes had sought my Lady's face
with reverence, and she of her assent
had satisfied them, and assured her grace,
- 43 Then to the light which did such hope present,
I turned about, and,—“Tell me, who are you?”
inquired in tone of tender sentiment.
- 46 Ah, when I so had spoken, how it grew
transfigured to my vision, and enhanced
in size and brilliance, joy and joy thereto!
- 49 ‘The World,’ he answered, thus enradianced,
‘held me short while, and had it longer been
much harm that will befall had never chanced.
- 52 I am concealed from thee behind a screen
of gladness that irradiates me round,
as swathes a creature its own silken sheen.
- 55 Much didst thou love me, with good reason fond;
for had I stayed below I would have shown
more of my love to thee than in the frond.
- 58 That left bank which is watered by the Rhone
when it has drunk the Sorgue up, would have held
me in good time the master of its own;
- 61 And that horn of Ausonia, citadelled
by Bari, Gaeta, and Catona, and where
Tronto and Verde in the sea are quelled.
- 64 Already gleamed the crown above my hair
of that dominion which the Danube purges
abandoning its German banks; and fair
- 67 Trinacria, which on occasion merges
Pachynus and Pelorus in one gloom
over the gulf that Eurys chiefly scourges
- 70 (Not through Typhoeus, but through sulphur fume),
would for her sovereigns be looking still,
through me from Charles and Rudolph yet to come,
- 73 Had not the subject folk, by lordship ill
exasperated, been provoked to cry
insurgent in Palermo: “Kill them, kill!”

- 76 E se mio frate questo antivedesse,
l' avara povertà di Catalogna
già fuggiria, perchè non gli offendesse;
- 79 Chè veramente provveder bisogna
per lui, o per altrui, sì ch' a sua barca
carcata più di carco non si pogna.
- 82 La sua natura, che di larga parca
discese, avria mestier di tal milizia
che non curasse di mettere in arca.'
- 85 'Perocch' io credo che l' alta letizia
che il tuo parlar m' infonde, signor mio,
là 've ogni ben si termina e s' inizia,
- 88 Per te si veggia, come la vegg' io,
grata m' è più, e anco questo ho caro,
perchè il discerni rimirando in Dio.
- 91 Fatto m' hai lieto, e così mi fa chiaro,
poichè parlando a dubitar m' hai mosso,
come uscir può di dolce seme amaro.'
- 94 Questo io a lui; ed egli a me: 'S' io posso
mostrarti un vero, a quel che tu domandi
terrai il viso come tieni il dosso.
- 97 Lo ben che tutto il regno che tu scandi
volge e contenta, fa esser virtute
sua provvidenza in questi corpi grandi;
- 100 E non pur le nature provvedute
son nella mente ch' è da sè perfetta,
ma esse insieme con la lor salute.
- 103 Perchè quantunque questo arco saetta,
disposto cade a provveduto fine,
sì come cosa in suo segno diretta.
- 106 Se ciò non fosse, il ciel che tu cammine
producerebbe sì li suoi effetti,
che non sarebbero arti, ma ruine;
- 109 E ciò esser non può, se gl' intelletti
che movon queste stelle non son manchi,
e manco il primo che non gli ha perfetti.
- 112 Vuoi tu che questo ver più ti s' imbianchi?'
Ed io: 'Non già, perchè impossibil veggio
che la natura, in quel ch' è uopo, stanchi.'

- 76 And had my brother been forewarned thereby,
he now were fleeing, lest it work him woe,
the greedy Catalonian poverty.
- 79 For he or his must make provision so,
forsooth, his overladen bark aboard,
that none shall further lading seek to stow.
- 82 His nature, niggard from a generous lord,
should be supported by such counsellors
as would give little heed to till or hoard.'
- 85 'The lofty rapture that thy telling pours
into me, is no clearer, master mine,
to my own vision than it is to yours,
- 88 Since thou beholdest it in the Divine;
grateful am I,—more grateful still that thou
seest it where good has end and origin.
- 91 Thou hast made me glad, and in like manner now
clear up the doubt awakened in my mind,
how from sweet seed can bitter fruitage grow?'
- 94 So I; and he to me: 'If I can find
an answer setting truth in evidence,
thou'lt have before thee what is now behind.
- 97 The Good that turns the whole and that contents
the Realm thou mountest, in these bodies vast
makes active virtue of its Providence;
- 100 And Mind in Itself perfect has forecast
the natures not alone, but has in charge
along with them their welfare first and last.
- 103 Whence whatsoever thing this bow discharge
alights to predetermined end, like dart
unerringly directed to the targe.
- 106 If not, the Heaven where thou a pilgrim art
would so in its effects come short of goal
that they would not be beautiful, but thwart,
- 109 Which could not be unless the minds that roll
these stars were in default, defaulting too
for leaving them at fault, the Primal Soul.
- 112 Dost thou require more proof that this is true?'
'Not so; it is impossible, I see,
that Nature weary in aught of need to do.'

- 115 Ond' egli ancora: 'Or di', sarebbe il peggio
per l' uomo in terra se non fosse cive?'
'Sì,' rispos' io, 'e qui ragion non cheggio.'
- 118 'E può egli esser, se giù non si vive
diversamente per diversi offici?
No, se il maestro vostro ben vi scrive.'
- 121 Sì venne deducendo infino a quici;
poscia conchiuse: 'Dunque esser diverse
convien dei vostri effetti le radici:
- 124 Per che un nasce Solone, ed altro Xerse,
altro Melchisedech, ed altro quello
che volando per l' aere il figlio perse.
- 127 La circular natura, ch' è suggello
alla cera mortal, fa ben sua arte,
ma non distingue l' un dall' altro ostello.
- 130 Quinci addivien ch' Esaù si diparte
per seme da Jacob, e vien Quirino
da sì vil padre che si rende a Marte.
- 133 Natura generata il suo cammino
simil farebbe sempre ai generanti,
se non vincesses il provveder divino.
- 136 Or quel che t' era retro t' è davanti;
ma perchè sappi che di te mi giova,
un corollario voglio che t' ammantì.
- 139 Sempre natura, se fortuna trova
discorde a sè, come ogni altra semente
fuor di sua region, fa mala prova.
- 142 E se il mondo laggiù ponesse mente
al fondamento che natura pone,
seguendo lui, avria buona la gente.
- 145 Ma voi torcete alla religione
tal che fia nato a cingersi la spada,
e fate re di tal ch' è da sermone;
- 148 Onde la traccia vostra è fuor di strada.'

- 115 'Now say, were't worse for man,' continued he,
'were he on earth unsocial?'—'It were so,'
I answered; 'that is obvious to me.'
- 118 'And can he be so if he live below
without diversity of offices?
if well your master write about it,—no!'
- 121 So he by inference drew up to this:
'Therefore perforce the roots of what is done
among you are diverse; whence not amiss
- 124 Is one born Solon, Xerxes one, and one
Melchizedek, another who would fly
fanning the welkin, losing thus his son.
- 127 Revolving Nature well her craft doth ply
stamping her seal on wax of mortal clay,
nor takes account of hostel, low or high.
- 130 Whence it occurs that Esau falls away
at birth from Jacob, and Quirinus rose
from Sire so mean that sired him Mars, they say.
- 133 Careers of children would conform to those
of their begetters, like to like in kind,
but that Divine prevision overthrows.
- 136 Now frontest thou the truth that was behind;
but that thou know my joy in thy behoof,
with corollary will I cloak thy mind.
- 139 If she find Fortune from herself aloof,
ever will Nature, like another seed
out of its region, come to evil proof.
- 142 And if the world down yonder would take heed
to what the rudiments of nature teach,
following these, well would her people speed.
- 145 But ye pervert him to a priest, whose reach
of nature fitted him for a belted knight,
and make a king of him who fain would preach:
- 148 Therefore ye wander from the way of right.'

NOTES

l. 3. The old astronomers, contriving 'to save appearances', were obliged to assume that the planets move in epicycles, which themselves are carried from east to west with the (supposed) general motion of the spheres around the earth. Milton, living in an age when the Copernican theory was about to be confirmed by Newton, suggests that God is moved to 'laughter at their quaint opinions wide' (*Paradise Lost*, viii. 75 ff.).

ll. 11-12. 'The planet fair that is love's comforter' (*Purgatorio* i. 19) is personified as coquetting with the sun, now in front as Phosphor or Lucifer (morning star), and now close behind as Hesperus (evening star).

l. 15. Evidence of the ascent.

ll. 22-3. According to the meteorology of Aristotle, winds are caused by cold and, when ignited, become lightning or meteors. Cf. *Purgatorio* v. 37-9.

ll. 34-7. The celestial Princes are the angelic order usually called Principalities. The courteous spirit quotes the first line of a canzone of Dante apostrophizing the intelligences controlling the third sphere in which we are. The poem was presumably the great literary novelty (as Grandgent remarks) at the time when the young prince and the young Poet became friends.

l. 44. The critical reader may note the polite *you* here, while *thou* and *thy* appear in ll. 85-91. The discrepancy is singular, I believe, both in the text and in my translation.

ll. 58 ff. Charles Martel, heir presumptive to many kingdoms: Provence, east of the Rhone (*Purgatorio* xx. 61); Ausonia (Italy), south of the Tronto and the Verde (Garigliano), i.e., the kingdom of Naples (or Apulia), and Hungary; while, as he was son of Charles II of Anjou and son-in-law of Kaiser Rudolph, Trinacria (Sicily) would have been governed by his heirs but for the misrule of his grandfather culminating in the Sicilian Vespers.

ll. 67-70. Here we see the whole east coast of Sicily and the Gulf of Catania overhung by the fumes of the colossal volcano. The prevailing wind over that sea is the stormy rain-bringing *scirocco*. The fable of the giant writhing under the mountain must of course be condemned by a soul in Heaven. Seldom has so much geography, history, mythology been packed into a few lines as in this passage!

ll. 73 ff. The Sicilian Vespers (A.D. 1282).

ll. 76-84. Robert, younger brother of Charles Martel, had been detained in Aragon for a number of years as a hostage. In 1295 (year of death of Charles Martel) Robert returned to Naples with a following of needy and greedy Catalonian fortune-hunters who, being installed in lucrative posts, proceeded to the same extortions as those which had provoked the revolt of 1282, known as the Sicilian Vespers. On the death of the father in 1309, this Robert was to usurp the throne despite the hereditary right of Charles Robert, son of the present speaker (see beginning of next Canto). In line 147 this brother, Robert, is again referred to: his hobby was preaching and 289 titles are extant of sermons by him. The father, Charles II of Naples (and titular king of Jerusalem), is referred to as generous: what Dante really thought of him is seen in Canto xix, ll. 127-9, and in *Purgatorio* vii. 124-9, where, in a curiously cautious round-about fashion the first Charles of Anjou, grandfather of Charles Martel, is rated as at worst better than his son and heir. See especially *Purgatorio* xx. 79-84. It is true that in all these passages Dante is speaking through the mouth of his characters; but here, of course, Charles Martel is made to speak of his father as a son should speak.

l. 93. How can a bad son descend from a good father?

ll. 94 ff. Arguing in the manner of a professor at Paris or Bologna.

ll. 112-20. Uniformity of son with father would make social life impossible. The abstract argument is greatly lightened by this little dialogue, as between master and student.

ll. 124-6. One a lawgiver, one a king, one a priest, another an inventor (Daedalus).

l. 131. Quirinus, the name of Romulus considered as a divinity.

l. 138. The corollary: an application of the lesson.

l. 147. Cf. the long note to lines 76-84. For Dante's pre-occupation with the question of degeneracy in good families see especially *Purg.* xiv, and *Par.* xvi.

CANTO NONO

- 1 Dapoichè Carlo tuo, bella Clemenza,
m' ebbe chiarito, mi narrò gl' inganni
che ricever dovea la sua semenza;
4 Ma disse: 'Taci, e lascia volger gli anni;'
sì ch' io non posso dir, se non che pianto
giusto verrà dietro ai vostri danni.
7 E già la vita di quel lume santo
rivolta s' era al sol che la riempie,
come quel ben ch' ad ogni cosa è tanto.
10 Ahi, anime ingannate, e fatture empie,
che da sì fatto ben torcete i cori,
drizzando in vanità le vostre tempie!
13 Ed ecco un altro di quegli splendori
ver me si fece, e il suo voler piacermi
significava nel chiarir di fuori.
16 Gli occhi di Beatrice, ch' eran fermi
sopra me come pria, di caro assenso
al mio disio certificato fermi.
19 'Deh metti al mio voler tosto compenso,
beato spirto,' dissi, 'e fammi prova
ch' io possa in te rifletter quel ch' io penso.'
22 Onde la luce che m' era ancor nuova,
del suo profondo, ond' ella pria cantava,
seguette, come a cui di ben far giova:
25 'In quella parte della terra prava
Italica, che siede tra Rialto
e le fontane di Brenta e di Piava,
28 Si leva un colle, e non surge molt' alto,
là onde scese già una facella,
che fece alla contrada un grande assalto.
31 D' una radice nacqui ed io ed ella;
Cunizza fui chiamata, e qui refulgo,
perchè mi vinse il lume d' esta stella.
34 Ma lietamente a me medesima indulgo
la cagion di mia sorte, e non mi noia,
che parria forse forte al vostro vulgo.

CANTO IX

A Great Lady and a Poet prophesy

- 1 After thy Charles had thus, O Clemence fair,
enlightened me, he told the frauds, he said
that his posterity would have to bear;
- 4 Adding: 'Be silent till the years are sped';
so that I naught can say, save that of right
tears for these wrongs of yours shall yet be shed.
- 7 And now the spirit of that holy light
had turned toward the Sun, that plenteous
fountain of good to all things requisite.
- 10 Ah, souls deluded, creatures impious,
to wrench your hearts from such a blessed state,
your brows tow'rd vanity directing thus!
- 13 And lo! another of those splendours great
drew nearer, while its will for my content
seemed from its features forth to radiate.
- 16 The eyes of Beatrice were on me bent
as heretofore, and to the thing I sought
gave me assurance of her sweet assent.
- 19 'Soon be thy longing to fulfilment brought,
blest spirit,' said I, 'and give me certitude
that in thyself I can reflect my thought.'
- 22 Whence the new light, from deep beatitude
wherein it had before been singing, said
in manner of one delighting to do good:
- 25 'In that depraved Italian region spread
between Rialto sitting by the sea
and where the Brenta and Piava head,
- 28 Rises a hill, not very loftily,
whence there came down a flaming brand of yore,
of that fair countryside the enemy.
- 31 From one root with it I arose, and bore
the name Cunizza, and here am overbowed
with splendour, since this star prevailed the more.
- 34 But gladly conscience has to me allowed
the cause of this my lot, without dismay,
though hard the saying, haply, to your crowd.

- 37 Di questa luculenta e cara gioia
del nostro cielo, che più m'è propinqua,
grande fama rimase, e pria che moia,
40 Questo centesim' anno ancor s'incinqua.
Vedi se far si dee l'uomo eccellente,
sì ch'altra vita la prima relinqua!
- 43 E ciò non pensa la turba presente,
che Tagliamento ed Adice richiude,
nè per esser battuta ancor si pente.
- 46 Ma tosto fia che Padova al palude
cangerà l'acqua che Vicenza bagna,
per esser al dover le genti crude.
- 49 E dove Sile e Cagnan s'accompagna,
tal signoreggia e va con la testa alta,
che già per lui carpir si fa la ragna.
- 52 Piangerà Feltro ancora la diffalta
dell'empio suo pastor, che sarà sconcia
sì che per simil non s'entrò in Malta.
- 55 Troppo sarebbe larga la bigoncia
che ricevesse il sangue Ferrarese,
e stanco chi il pesasse ad oncia ad oncia,
- 58 Che donerà questo prete cortese
per mostrarsi di parte; e cotai doni
conformi fieno al viver del paese.
- 61 Su sono specchi, voi dicete Troni,
onde rifulge a noi Dio giudicante,
sì che questi parlar ne paion buoni.'
- 64 Qui si tacette, e fecemi sembante
che fosse ad altro volta, per la rota
in che si mise, com'era davante.
- 67 L'altra letizia, che m'era già nota
preclara cosa, mi si fece in vista
qual fin balascio in che lo sol percota.
- 70 Per letiziar lassù fulgor s'acquista,
sì come riso qui; ma giù s'abbuia
l'ombra di fuor, come la mente è trista.
- 73 'Dio vede tutto, e tuo veder s'inluia,'
diss'io, 'beato spirto, sì che nulla
voglia di sè a te puote esser fuia.

- 37 This precious jewel of pellucid ray
our heaven adorning and to me most near,
left great renown, and ere it fade away
40 Shall be quintupled this centennial year.
Ah, let man look to make him excellent
that the first life bequeath a second there!
- 43 So reason not the present rabblement
whom Tagliamento and Adigè contain,
nor yet for being scourged are penitent.
46 But soon shall Padua at the pool distain
the water that should wash Vicenza sweet,
since mutinous to duty are the men.
- 49 And there where Silè and Cagnano meet
one plays the lord and walks with insolence,
although the snare is set to trap his feet.
- 52 Moreover Feltro shall bewail the offence
of her unconsecrated pastor,—none
so foul has entered Malta's prison-pens.
- 55 Too large would be the measure of the tun
that of the Ferrarese should hold the gore
(to weigh it ounce by ounce would weary one!)
- 58 Which this obliging priest will have to pour
to prove him partisan; such gifts are due
to match the life that land is noted for!
- 61 Above are mirrors—thrones as called by you—
whence God in judgement doth upon us shine
so that seem good to us these sayings true.'
- 64 Herewith she held her peace, and gave me sign
of being turned to other heed, whirled on
as heretofore along the dance divine.
- 67 The other joy, already known as one,
swam into vision as a thing illumed,
like a choice ruby smitten by the sun.
- 70 Brightness up there by rapture is assumed
like laughter here on earth; but they who live
below are shadowed as the soul is gloomed.
- 73 'All-seeing God,' said I, 'to thee doth give
vision so inwardly with Him imbued,
can no desire from thee be fugitive.

- 76 Dunque la voce tua, che il ciel trastulla
sempre col canto di quei fochi pii
che di sei ali facean la cuculla,
79 Perchè non satisface ai miei disii?
Già non attenderei io tua domanda,
s'io m'intuassi, come tu t'immii.'
82 'La maggior valle in che l'acqua si spanda,'
incominciaro allor le sue parole,
'fuor di quel mar che la terra inghirlanda,
85 Tra i discordanti liti, contra il sole
tanto sen va che fa meridiano
là dove l'orizzonte pria far suole.
88 Di quella valle fu' io littorano,
tra Ebro e Macra, che per cammin corto
lo Genovese parte dal Toscano.
91 Ad un occaso quasi e ad un orto
Buggea siede e la terra ond'io fui,
che fe' del sangue suo già caldo il porto.
94 Folco mi disse quella gente a cui
fu noto il nome mio, e questo cielo
di me s'imprenta, com'io fei di lui;
97 Chè più non arse la figlia di Belo,
noiando ed a Sicheo ed a Creusa,
di me, infin che si convenne al pelo;
100 Nè quella Rodopeia, che delusa
fu da Demofoonte, nè Alcide
quando Iole nel cor ebbe richiusa.
103 Non però qui si pente, ma si ride,
non della colpa, ch'a mente non torna,
ma del valore ch'ordinò e provide.
106 Qui si rimira nell'arte che adorna
cotanto effetto, e discernesi il bene
per che il mondo di su quel di giù torna.
109 Ma perchè le tue voglie tutte piene
ten porti, che son nate in questa spera,
procedere ancor oltre mi conviene.
112 Tu vuoi saper chi è in questa lumiera,
che qui appresso me così scintilla
come raggio di sole in acqua mera.

- 76 Therefore thy voice that gives beatitude
to Heaven, in concert with those fires divine
who with their six wings make themselves a hood,
79 Why does it leave me in desire to pine?
Not now would I be waiting thy demand
did I indwell thy soul, as thou dost mine.'
82 'The greatest valley into which expand
the waters,' his reply to me began,
'forth from that sea engarlanding the land,
85 Extends 'twixt alien shores so long a span
against the sun, that what was just before
horizon, soon appears meridian.
88 I was a dweller midway on that shore
'twixt Ebro and Magra, which with passage short
bars to the Genoese the Tuscan door.
91 For rise and set of sun of one report
would be Buggeä and my native town,
whose blood once warmed the waters of the port.
94 Folco they called me where my name's renown
was noted, and this heaven is stamped by me
as on me once its influence rained down.
97 More burned not Belus's daughter, balefully
both to Sichaeus and Creüsa too,
than I while it became my locks; nor she,
100 The Rhodopeian maid who had to rue
Demophoön's deceit; Alcides not
when Iolë into his heart he drew.
103 Yet nowise grieve, but smile we in this spot,
not at the fault which ne'er returns to mind,
but at the Worth that ordered and forethought.
106 Here we behold the skill which has assigned
itself so fair result,—discern the Good
which with the world above atones mankind.
109 But that thou bear away in plenitude
fulfilled those wishes native to this sphere,
with something further I perforce conclude.
112 Thou wouldest know who in this radiance here
beside me scintillates, as in pure stream
a sunbeam tremulous in water clear.

- 115 Or sappi che là entro si tranquilla
Raab, ed a nostr' ordine congiunta,
di lei nel sommo grado si sigilla.
- 118 Da questo cielo in cui l' ombra s' appunta
che il vostro mondo face, pria ch' altr' alma
del trionfo di Cristo fu assunta.
- 121 Ben si convenne lei lasciar per palma
in alcun cielo dell' alta vittoria
che s' acquistò con l' una e l' altra palma;
- 124 Perch' ella favorò la prima gloria
di Josuè in sulla Terra Santa,
che poco tocca al papa la memoria.
- 127 La tua città, che di colui è pianta
che pria volse le spalle al suo fattore,
e di cui è la invidia tanto pianta,
- 130 Produce e spande il maledetto fiore
ch' ha disviate le pecore e gli agni,
perocchè fatto ha lupo del pastore.
- 133 Per questo l' Evangelio e i Dottor magni
son derelitti, e solo ai Decretali
si studia sì che pare ai lor vivagni.
- 136 A questo intende il papa e i cardinali:
non vanno i lor pensieri a Nazzarette,
là dove Gabriello aperse l' ali.
- 139 Ma Vaticano e l' altre parti elette
di Roma, che son state cimiterio
alla milizia che Pietro seguette,
- 142 Tosto libere fien dell' adulterio.'

- 115 Now learn that rests at peace within that beam
Rahab, and that our order, made her own,
bears signet of her in degree supreme.
- 118 Into this heaven, where ends the shadowy cone
cast by your earth, all other souls before,
she, in Christ's triumph, was received alone.
- 121 Meet was it in some heaven forevermore
leave her as palm of the victorious hope
achieved with one palm and the other; for
- 124 She lent her aid to the first glorious scope
of Joshua upon the Holy Land,
that little stirs the memory of the Pope.
- 127 Thy City, the plantation of his hand
who turned his back on his Creator first,
and from whose envy spring your woes, doth brand
- 130 And scatter far and wide that flower accursed
whereby the shepherd into wolf is turned,
so that the sheep and lambs are all dispersed.
- 133 The Gospel and the doctors great are spurned,
and only the Decretals studied well
for this,—as by their margin is discerned.
- 136 On this the Pope and cardinals do dwell:
never on Nazareth is fixed their scan,
where opened once his pinions Gabriel.
- 139 But holy parts of Rome, both Vatican
and other, chosen as the burial spot
of the army whereof Peter led the van,
- 142 Soon shall be purged of the adulterous blot.'

NOTES

ll. 1-6. Both the wife of Charles Martel and his daughter bore the name of Clemence. It is a matter of conjecture as to which is here apostrophized. The younger Clemence became queen of France in Dante's time; the mother seems to have died before 1300, or about that time. The form of expression surely points to the mother! The son, Charles Robert, was deprived of the throne of Naples by an usurping uncle Robert.

l. 13. Cunizza da Romano.

ll. 25-8. The country between the mountains whence those rivers descend and the lagoons of Venice is for poetical purposes the March of Treviso. The hill of Romano is not far from Asolo, which readers of Browning will remember. The Piava (Piavë) River is familiar as the line where the Italians in the Great War turned defeat to victory.

l. 29. This firebrand is the notorious Ezzelino da Romano who enjoys the bad eminence of having been the worst of Italian tyrants—no small distinction! Dante's son Peter, in his Latin commentary, tells the story of the dream of the mother that she was about to bring forth a firebrand which should lay waste the March of Treviso. Frederick the Second, with politic cruelty, sacrificed a daughter to this Minotaur. Symonds devotes an edifying chapter to him in his *Age of the Despots*. In Browning's 'Sordello' he figures as Ecelin; his very name is torn to tatters—Azzolino, Eccelino, Icilinus, &c. He does appear to have been loyal to the great Hohenstaufen through thick and thin. Adopting the marking system applied by Dante to another, we may, to be just to him, rate his virtue at I and the *per contra* at M(cf. *Paradiso* xix. 127). His sister must have been a charming creature, not without a certain engaging frailty.

ll. 32-6. Remorse for sin disappears in Lethë (*Purgatorio* xxxi). Cunizza contemplates without regret the influence of the genial planet which had shaped her destiny.

ll. 37 ff. Folco (or Folquet) of Marseilles, first troubadour, then monk, then bishop. It is difficult to share Dante's warm admiration for this personage. Certainly the prophecy of his fame was a rash one!

ll. 43-60. There is so much local geography and provincial chronicle here that the allusions become rather too complicated for clear summary elucidation. First, it is prophesied that Paduan blood shall stain the pool formed by the Bacchi-

glione near Vicenza (victory of Can Grande in 1314). Secondly, that Richard of Camino, lord of Treviso (son of the good Gerard of *Purgatorio* xvi), shall be assassinated (1312). Thirdly, that the treacherous bishop of Feltre shall give up to the governor of Ferrara some refugees to be decapitated—an act which renders this obliging priest the agent of their murder (1314). There was a papal prison called Malta in the Lake of Bolsena. Cunizza, herself a native of that land, adds that such gifts (surrender of political refugees) match the custom of the country. Finally she excuses her apparent bitterness by explaining that she beholds these judgements divine in angelic mirrors, called in human speech 'thrones'.

l. 71. 'What is laughter if not a coruscation of the joy of the soul?'—*Convivio*, iii. 8.

ll. 73 ff. Dante prays the soul of Folco to reply to his unspoken question.

ll. 82-93. 'The greatest valley into which the water flows from the ocean enwreathing earth, runs from west to east the whole distance between meridian and horizon (i.e., an arc of ninety degrees of earth's surface). On the coast of that valley I dwelt between the Ebro and the Magra, whose short course divides Genoa from Tuscany. Bougie sees the sun rise and set at the same time as my town, whose blood once warmed its port.' The answer to this geographical historical astronomical puzzle is: Marseilles. Dante's notion of geography seems in many respects to be no great advance upon that of Strabo. The ocean surrounds the habitable part of the globe—which is all in the northern hemisphere. The valley forming the bed of the Great Middle Sea spreads west to east one fourth the distance round the globe (an enormous exaggeration!). Marseilles is only very slightly east of north from Bougie, which was then the most important seaport of northwest Africa. Reckoning upon the meridian, as apparently Dante here did, Marseilles is almost exactly half-way between the mouth of the Magra (ten degrees east of Greenwich) and that of Ebro. When Caesar 'struck at Marseilles' (*Purgatorio* xviii. 102) the blood, according to Lucan's *Pharsalia* iii. 572-7, reddened the sea-foam. The passage is a notable example of the poetry of the map.

ll. 97-102. The examples, being all of tragic love, suggest that Folco's passion may have had unhappy consequences. Dido and Phyllis of Rhodope took their own lives; the passion of Hercules for Iolë brought about his own death, that of Dejanira, and that of Lichas. But when Folco's locks began to

gray he became a monk and, later, an episcopal persecutor of the Waldenses.

ll. 103 ff. He can speak truly and serenely of his time of sin (*Purgatorio xxxi*).

ll. 116 ff. For Rahab, the harlot, see Joshua ii, vi. 17-25, also Hebrews xi. 30-1; James ii. 25. From Matthew i. 5, we learn that she was ancestress of Jesus the Christ. Theological allegory found in her 'line of scarlet thread in the window' the prophetic symbol of His blood shed for the remission of sin. The word 'palm' (l. 122) means of course *token*: the reference in the next line is to the lifting of the hands in prayer, of which the uplifted hands of Christ on the Cross are a symbol.

l. 118. Here ends the shadow cast by earth, its length being estimated by Ptolemy as 871,000 miles. Allegorical significance was doubtless attached to this supposed fact. Souls in the spheres of the moon, Mercury, and Venus are obviously persons whose behaviour here below was at times somewhat incorrect.

l. 130. The golden florin with the stamp of the lily.

l. 133 to end. The study of ecclesiastical law is more profitable for the ambitious and the avaricious than that of pure theology.

ll. 139-42. Another unfulfilled prophecy.

Canto Decimo

CANTO DECIMO

- 1 Guardando nel suo figlio con l' amore
che l' uno e l' altro eternalmente spira,
lo primo ed ineffabile valore,
- 4 Quanto per mente o per loco si gira
con tanto ordine fe', ch' esser non puote
senza gustar di lui chi ciò rimira.
- 7 Leva dunque, lettor, all' alte rote
meco la vista dritto a quella parte
dove l' un moto e l' altro si percote;
- 10 E lì comincia a vagheggiar nell' arte
di quel maestro, che dentro a sè l' ama
tanto che mai da lei l' occhio non parte.
- 13 Vedi come da indi si dirama
l' obbliquo cerchio che i pianeti porta,
per soddisfare al mondo che li chiama;
- 16 E se la strada lor non fosse torta,
molta virtù nel ciel sarebbe in vano,
e quasi ogni potenza quaggiù morta.
- 19 E se dal dritto più o men lontano
fosse il partire, assai sarebbe manco
e giù e su dell' ordine mondano.
- 22 Or ti riman, lettor, sopra il tuo banco,
dietro pensando a ciò che si preliba,
s' esser vuoi lieto assai prima che stanco.
- 25 Messo t' ho innanzi; omai per te ti ciba;
chè a sè torce tutta la mia cura
quella materia ond' io son fatto scriba.
- 28 Lo ministro maggior della natura,
che del valor del cielo il mondo imprenta,
e col suo lume il tempo ne misura,
- 31 Con quella parte che su si rammenta
congiunto, si girava per le spire
in che più tosto ognora s' appresenta:
- 34 Ed io era con lui; ma del salire
non m' accors' io, se non com' uom s' accorge,
anzi il primo pensier, del suo venire.

CANTO X

Heaven of the Sun: Starry Garland of Sages

- 1 The primal and unutterable Worth
gazing upon His Son's benignant face
with Love which both eternally breathe forth,
4 Made all things that revolve through mind or space
with so much order that whoso looks aright
can never want some image of His Grace.
7 Then, Reader, lift straight up with me thy sight
to the high wheels, where the two motions come
to that point where they each on other smite,
10 And there begin to enjoy His masterdom
who loves His work within Him with such love
as never to withdraw His eye therefrom.
13 Look, how that circle oblique, the bearer of
the planets, is at present branching thence
to appease the world that calls them from above;
16 And were their road not bent, much influence
in Heaven would be unfruitful, and down here
almost all virtue drained to impotence;
19 Did it at less or greater angle veer
from the right line, deficiency were dire
both up and down, in either hemisphere.
22 Now on this foretaste of the heart's desire,
remain, O Reader, on thy seat to brood,
for it will charm thee long before thou tire;
25 I set it forth; do thou partake the food;
for I have made me scribe of such a theme
as claims the whole of my solicitude.
28 The Minister of Nature all-supreme,
who with the worth of Heaven the world is sealing
and measuring our time out with his beam,
31 Joined with that region named above, was wheeling
along the spirals of that thoroughfare
where daily earlier is his revealing;
34 And I along with him, but unaware
of the ascending, more than one perceives
thought in the mind before its advent there.

- 37 È Beatrice, quella che si scorge
di bene in meglio sì subitamente
che l'atto suo per tempo non si sporge. .
- 40 Quant'esser convenia da sè lucente,
quel ch'era dentro al sol dov'io entra' mi,
non per color ma per lume parvente!
- 43 Perch'io lo ingegno, l'arte e l'uso chiami,
sì nol direi che mai s'immaginasse,
ma creder puossi, e di veder si brami.
- 46 E se le fantasie nostre son basse
a tanta altezza, non è maraviglia,
chè sopra il sol non fu occhio ch'andasse.
- 49 Tal era quivi la quarta famiglia
dell'alto padre che sempre la sazia,
mostrando come spira e come figlia.
- 52 E Beatrice incominciò: 'Ringrazia,
ringrazia il Sol degli Angeli, ch'a questo
sensibil t'ha levato per sua grazia.'
- 55 Cor di mortal non fu mai sì digesto
a devozione, ed a rendersi a Dio
con tutto il suo gradir cotanto presto,
- 58 Com'a quelle parole mi fec'io;
e sì tutto il mio amore in lui si mise,
che Beatrice eclissò nell'oblio.
- 61 Non le dispiacque; ma sì se ne rise,
che lo splendor degli occhi suoi ridenti
mia mente unita in più cose divise.
- 64 Io vidi più fulgor vivi e vincenti
far di noi centro e di sè far corona,
più dolci in voce che in vista lucenti.
- 67 Così cinger la figlia di Latona
vedem tal volta, quando l'aere è pregno
sì che ritenga il fil che fa la zona.
- 70 Nella corte del ciel ond'io rivegno,
si trovan molte gioie care e belle
tanto che non si posson trar del regno,
- 73 E il canto di quei lumi era di quelle;
chi non s'impenna sì che lassù voli,
dal muto aspetti quindi le novelle.

- 37 'Tis Beatrice herself who leading gives
from good to better, so immediately
her act no vestige of duration leaves.
- 40 Within the sun where I had entered, see
how brighten spirits into recognition,
by light, not colour, manifest to me!
- 43 What though I summon genius, art, tradition,
that splendour could be imaged nevermore,
but faith may see,—ah, let us crave the vision!
- 46 No wonder our low fancy cannot soar
to such an altitude, for never yet
was eye that did not quail the sun before.
- 49 So bright was the fourth family, here set
by the High Sire, imbuing them with bliss,
showing how He doth breathe, and how beget.
- 52 'Give thanks to Him,' began now Beatrice,
'thank Him who of the angels is the Sun,
who by His Grace has lifted thee to this!'
- 55 So ardently subdued to orison
devoted, heart of mortal yet was not,
so eager for divine surrender none,
- 58 As at these words my own desire was hot;
and so my love to Him was wholly plighted
that Beatrice was in eclipse forgot.
- 61 Nor this displeased her; but her eyes so lighted
with laughter, that the splendour of her mien
drew off to other things my mind united.
- 64 For other living lustres, passing keen,
centred upon us like a chaplet round,
still sweeter in their voice than bright in sheen.
- 67 The daughter of Latona thus enwound
is seen at moments when so teems the air
it holds the thread wherewith her zone is bound.
- 70 Manifold are the jewels dear and fair
in Court of Heaven, whence I returning come,
and none to carry them away could dare;
- 73 Of these the carols of those lights were some:
who takes not wing up thitherward to fly
may better ask for tidings of the dumb!

- 76 Poi sì cantando quegli ardenti soli
si fur girati intorno a noi tre volte,
come stelle vicine ai fermi poli.
- 79 Donne mi parver non da ballo sciolte,
ma che s'arrestin tacite, ascoltando
fin che le nuove note hanno ricolte.
- 82 E dentro all'un senti' cominciar: 'Quando
lo raggio della grazia, onde s'accende
verace amore, e che poi cresce amando
- 85 Multiplicato, in te tanto risplende,
che ti conduce su per quella scala,
u' senza risalir nessun discende,
- 88 Qual ti negasse il vin della sua fiala
per la tua sete, in libertà non fora,
se non com'acqua ch'al mar non si cala.
- 91 Tu vuoi saper di quai piante s'infiora
questa ghirlanda, che intorno vagheggia
la bella donna ch'al ciel t'avvalora.
- 94 Io fui degli agni della santa greggia
che Domenico mena per cammino,
u' ben s'impingua se non si vaneggia.
- 97 Questi che m'è a destra più vicino,
frate e maestro fummi, ed esso Alberto
è di Cologna, ed io Thomas d'Aquino.
- 100 Se sì di tutti gli altri esser vuoi certo,
diretro al mio parlar ten vien col viso
girando su per lo beato serto:
- 103 Quell'altro fiammeggiare esce del riso
di Grazian, che l'uno e l'altro foro
aiutò sì che piace in Paradiso.
- 106 L'altro ch'appresso adorna il nostro coro,
quel Pietro fu, che con la poverella
offerse a Santa Chiesa suo tesoro.
- 109 La quinta luce, ch'è tra noi più bella,
spira di tale amor, che tutto il mondo
laggiù ne gola di saper novella.
- 112 Entro v'è l'alta mente u' sì profondo
saper fu messo, che se il vero è vero,
a veder tanto non surse il secondo.

- 76 When, chanting so, those blazing suns on high
had wheeled about us thrice, in radiance
like stars the steadfast pole for ever nigh,
79 Ladies they seemed, who break not from the dance,
but stop in silence listening for the chord
whereto their tripping steps again advance.
82 And from within one light came forth this word:
‘Since radiance of Grace, enkindling so
true love to be the multiplied reward
85 Of loving, doth in thee so brightly glow,
leading thee up that stairway where none save
to reascend can ever go below,—
88 Whoever should deny thee if thou crave
wine from his flagon, would be free no more
than water seeking not the level wave.
91 Thou wouldest know what blossoms now enflower
this garland, circling with blithe roundelay
the Lady beautiful, thy heavenly dower.
94 Lamb of the holy flock was I, whose way
is shepherded by Dominic, and here
fair is the fattening, if they do not stray.
97 The brother to my dexter hand most near
was Albert of Cologne, my master best,
and I was Thomas of Aquino there.
100 And if to name and number all the rest
thou cravest of me, let thy look awhile
circle up here along the garland blest.
103 That other splendour issues from the smile
of Gratian,—one and the other court he lent
such aid as Heaven with rapture to beguile.
106 And of our chorus the next ornament
was Peter, who gave Holy Church his mite
like the poor woman of the Testament.
109 The fifth and loveliest of our circle bright
breathes from such love that all the world below
looks eagerly for tidings of its plight:
112 Within it is the lofty spirit, so
imbued with wisdom that, if truth be true,
no second rose so much to see and know.

- 115 Appresso vedi il lume di quel cero
che giuso in carne più addentro vide
l'angelica natura e il ministero.
- 118 Nell'altra piccioletta luce ride
quell'avvocato dei tempi cristiani,
del cui latino Augustin si provvede.
- 121 Or se tu l'occhio della mente trani
di luce in luce, dietro alle mie lode,
già dell'ottava con sete rimani.
- 124 Per vedere ogni ben dentro vi gode
l'anima santa, che il mondo fallace
fa manifesto a chi di lei ben ode.
- 127 Lo corpo ond'ella fu cacciata giace
giuso in Cieldauro, ed essa da martiro
e da esilio venne a questa pace.
- 130 Vedi oltre fiammeggiar l'ardente spiro
d'Isidoro, di Beda, e di Riccardo
che a considerar fu più che viro.
- 133 Questi onde a me ritorna il tuo riguardo,
è il lume d'uno spirto, che in pensieri
gravi a morir gli parve venir tardo.
- 136 Essa è la luce eterna di Sigieri,
che, leggendo nel vico degli strami,
sillogizzò invidiosi veri.'
- 139 Indi come orologio, che ne chiami
nell'ora che la sposa di Dio surge
a mattinar lo sposo perchè l'ami,
- 142 Che l'una parte l'altra tira ed urge,
tin tin sonando con sì dolce nota,
che il ben disposto spirto d'amor turge;
- 145 Così vid'io la gloriosa rota
moversi e render voce a voce in tempra
ed in dolcezza ch'esser non può nota,
- 148 Se non colà dove gioir s'insempra.

- 115 Next it the radiance of that taper view
which, still in mortal flesh, did best divine
the angelic nature, and its service due.
- 118 Next in that little light see, smiling, shine
that advocate of Christian ages whose
fair Latin edified Saint Augustine.
- 121 Now, if in sequence as my praise pursues
from light to light, thy mental eye is veering,
thou cravest for the eighth, and canst not choose.
- 124 Therein the sight of Good Supreme is cheering
the holy soul who renders evident
the world's deceit to whoso well give hearing.
- 127 The body whence on earth it hunted went
lies in Cieldauro, and from torture came
into this peace and out of banishment.
- 130 And yonder see the fervent spirits flame
of Isidore, of Bede, of Richard who
in contemplation more than man became.
- 133 This one, wherefrom to me returns thy view,
shines from a soul to thought so dedicate
that death, he thought, too slowly on him drew:
- 136 This is the light of Siger, beyond date,
who in the Street of Straw once lecturing,
had enviable truths to demonstrate.'
- 139 Then as a chiming horologe doth ring
to rouse the Bride of God to matin-song
unto the Spouse, His love soliciting,
- 142 Where one part draws another and thrusts along
with tintinnating note harmonious
whence love in well-tuned spirit waxes strong,—
- 145 The glorious wheel I saw revolving thus
and render voice to voice, in concord blending
with sweetness never to be known of us,
- 148 Save in that place where joy is never-ending.

NOTES

In the preceding cantos we have passed through the spheres of the Moon, of Mercury, and of Venus, all of which are more or less subject at times to the influence of the overshadowing cone of darkness projected from the Earth (Canto ix. 118-19). Here we emerge beyond the reach of such an occasional moral cloud into the splendour of the sphere of the Sun. In the first twenty-seven lines of this canto the Poet seems deliberately to mark the transition by a succinct consideration of the art of the Creator shown in the deviation of the Ecliptic from the Equator.

ll. 1-3. The three lines of this first tercet (terzetto) refer to the three Persons of the Trinity. It is believed that Dante was moved to his choice of the *terza rima* for the *Poema Sacro* by the mystic connotations of the number three and its multiples.

ll. 8-21. The intersection of the Equator and the Ecliptic (cf. Canto i, ll. 37-9), which occurs at the vernal equinox when the sun is in Aries. The 'oblique circle' whereby the road of the sun and planets deviates from the equator, thus producing alternation of seasons, appeared even more admirable in that age when the habitable part of earth was supposed to be only the north temperate zone. There are some similar observations, less directly and clearly expressed, in *Paradise Lost*, Book x, lines 668 ff.

l. 28. The sun, to which Dante had imperceptibly arisen.

l. 31. Referring to ll. 8-9, where attention is called to the junction of the path of the sun and the plane of the Equator at the vernal Equinox. It is well to remember that our ideal pilgrimage takes place at the very season of the Canterbury pilgrimage, when

‘the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne.’

ll. 32-3. The apparent track of the sun at this season is a spiral one, the line coming a little farther northward every day, as any observer of the point of its emergence morning after morning can easily perceive,

l. 37. Oxford text reads *O Beatrice*.

l. 39. Oxford text punctuates: *non si sporge*,

l. 40. Oxford text punctuates: *da sè lucente!*

l. 42. Oxford text punctuates: *per lume parvente*,

ll. 40-60. In these lines, what exhilaration, what rapture of spirit! One thinks, perhaps, of certain lines of Wordsworth, who never, however, achieves such release. Passing insensibly

from the sphere of Venus, where the apex of earth's shadow still somehow clouds the moral sky, we enter a region of effulgent splendour wherein circle rainbow-like the souls of those great thinkers who have come nearest to true vision of things divine. First, at the suggestion of Beatrice, the poet-soul springs aloft on wings of prayer to such altitude that even she is for a moment 'in eclipse forgot'. But such concentration comes and goes ere one can say, 'it lightens'. The next moment attention is scattered among the new objects soliciting the eye.

l. 61. The smile of Beatrice.

l. 67. The garland of the souls is like the halo around the moon, when the air, pregnant with moisture, retains the thread whereof is woven the rainbow tissue of her girdle.

l. 79. Dancing the successive stanzas of the ballata.

l. 83. Speaks the great Dominican theologian, Thomas Aquinas, Doctor Angelicus.

l. 96. Note this line; cf. l. 114.

l. 98. Albertus Magnus, Doctor Universalis.

l. 104. Gratian, whose text-book of Canon Law helped both the ecclesiastical and the civil court.

l. 106. Peter Lombard.

l. 109. Solomon.

l. 114. The reader will save time by taking mental note of this line and 96, for they will be discussed later.

l. 115. Dionysius.

l. 118. Orosius.

l. 125. Boethius.

l. 128. Church of the Golden Ceiling, at Pavia

l. 131. St. Isidore of Seville; the Venerable Bede; Richard of St. Victor, the Great Contemplator.

ll. 133-8. Dramatic interest is aroused and the harmony of Heaven illustrated when it is understood that St. Thomas Aquinas had publicly controverted opinions of Siger, who was one of the most daring of thinkers. He is said to have questioned the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul, and even the existence of God. Cited before the Roman Curia for heresy, he was stabbed to death at Orvieto by a fanatical cleric. An alternative translation of *invidiosi veri* is 'truths which brought him envy' (Toynbee). But cf. *invegiar*, Canto xii. 142.

ll. 136-8. Siger of Brabant, who lectured at Paris on theology. The mention of the *Vicus Straminis*, or *Rue du Fouarre* (Straw Street) in the Latin Quarter, tends to confirm the tradition that Dante studied at Paris.

l. 140. The Bride is throughout the Poem, of course, the Church.

CANTO DECIMOPRIMO

- 1 O insensata cura dei mortali,
quanto son difettivi sillogismi
quei che ti fanno in basso batter l'ali!
- 4 Chi dietro a iura, e chi ad aforismi
sen giva, e chi seguendo sacerdozio,
e chi regnar per forza o per sofismi,
- 7 E chi rubare, e chi civil negozio,
chi nel diletto della carne involto,
s'affaticava, e chi si dava all'ozio;
- 10 Quando da tutte queste cose sciolto,
con Beatrice m'era suso in cielo
cotanto gloriosamente accolto.
- 13 Poi che ciascuno fu tornato ne lo
punto del cerchio in che avanti s'era,
fermossi come a candellier candelo.
- 16 Ed io senti' dentro a quella lumiera
che pria m'avea parlato, sorridendo
incominciar, facendosi più mera:
- 19 'Così com' io del suo raggio risplendo,
sì, riguardando nella luce eterna,
li tuoi pensieri, onde cagioni, apprendo.
- 22 Tu dubbi, ed hai voler che si ricerna
in sì aperta e in sì distesa lingua
lo dicer mio, ch' al tuo sentir si sterna,
- 25 Ove dinanzi dissi: "U' ben s'impingua,"
e là u' dissi: "Non surse il secondo;"
e qui è uopo che ben si distingua.
- 28 La provvidenza, che governa il mondo
con quel consiglio nel quale ogni aspetto
creato è vinto pria che vada al fondo,
- 31 Perocchè andasse ver lo suo diletto
la sposa di colui, ch' ad alte grida
disposò lei col sangue benedetto,
- 34 In sè sicura ed anco a lui più fida,
due Principi ordinò in suo favore,
che quinci e quindi le fosser per guida.

CANTO XI

St. Thomas Aquinas in praise of St. Francis

- 1 Insane solicitude for mortal things,
 alas, how all the reasonings are vain
 that make thee heavily beat down thy wings!
- 4 One followed priesthood and one followed gain,
 one aphorisms of Hippocrates,
 one strove by violence or craft to reign,
- 7 One throve by theft, one by juristic pleas,
 one in the pleasures of the flesh enwound
 was wearing out, and one gave up to ease,
- 10 While I, set free from all that dreary round,
 aloft in Heaven, with Beatrice at hand,
 so passing glorious a welcome found.
- 13 When every member of that circling band
 had gained the point where he had been before,
 he stayed, as stays the taper in the stand.
- 16 And now I heard the former voice once more
 within that lustre, while yet more intense
 became the brilliance of the smile it wore:
- 19 'As I am kindled in His effluence,
 so, gazing into the Eternal Light,
 I trace thy thoughts back to their rudiments.
- 22 Thou doubtest, and wouldst have me sift aright
 my utterance, and in plain language bring
 the matter to the level of thy sight
- 25 Where lately I said,—“Where is good fattening”,
 and where again I said, “No second rose”;
 and here is need of clear distinguishing.
- 28 That Providence which rules the world with those
 mysterious laws that baffle mortal eye
 before it ever to the bottom goes
- 31 (So that to wed with Him who espoused her by
 the blessed blood with loud proclaim, the Bride
 might go with greater nuptial loyalty,
- 34 And with more self-security beside),
 ordained two princes who should both attend her,
 one upon either hand to be her guide.

- 37 L' un fu tutto serafico in ardore,
l' altro per sapienza in terra fue
di cherubica luce uno splendore.
- 40 Dell' un dirò, perocchè d' ambedue
si dice l' un pregiando, qual ch' uom prende,
perchè ad un fine fur l' opere sue.
- 43 Intra Tupino e l' acqua che discende
del colle eletto del beato Ubaldo,
fertile costa d' alto monte pende,
- 46 Onde Perugia sente freddo e caldo
da Porta Sole, e dietro le piange
per grave giogo Nocera con Gualdo.
- 49 Di questa costa là dov' ella frange
più sua rattezza, nacque al mondo un sole,
come fa questo tal volta di Gange.
- 52 Però chi d' esso loco fa parole
non dica Ascesi, che direbbe corto,
ma Oriente, se proprio dir vuole.
- 55 Non era ancor molto lontan dall' orto,
ch' ei cominciò a far sentir la terra
della sua gran virtute alcun conforto;
- 58 Chè per tal donna giovinetto in guerra
del padre corse, a cui, com' alla morte,
la porta del piacer nessun disserra;
- 61 Ed innanzi alla sua spirital corte,
et coram patre le si fece unito;
poscia di dì in dì l' amò più forte.
- 64 Questa, privata del primo marito,
mille cent' anni e più dispetta e scura
fino a costui si stette senza invito;
- 67 Nè valse udir che la trovò sicura
con Amiclate, al suon della sua voce,
colui ch' a tutto il mondo fe' paura;
- 70 Nè valse esser costante, nè feroce,
sì che, dove Maria rimase giuso,
ella con Cristo salse in sulla croce.
- 73 Ma perch' io non proceda troppo chiuso,
Francesco e Povertà per questi amanti
prendi oramai nel mio parlar diffuso.

- 37 All fire seraphical was one defender;
the other one with wisdom all aflame,
light to the world cherubic in its splendour.
- 40 Of one I mean to speak, for both may claim
our praises, whichsoever one intending,
because their labours had a single aim.
- 43 Between Topino and the stream descending
the hill that blessed Ubald erewhile chose,
a fertile slope is from the mountain bending,
- 46 Whence hot and cold upon Perugia blows
through Porta Solë; while behind it groan
Gualdo and Nocera their heavy woes.
- 49 Where drops the highland less abruptly prone,
a sun upon the world began ascent,
as somewhiles out of Ganges dawns our own.
- 52 Wherefore let any, when this place is meant,
say not "Ascesi", which were short to say,
but, fittier to speak, say "Orient"!
- 55 He, from his rising not yet far away,
began to give the world some handsel of
the comfort-giving virtue of his ray;
- 58 And, still a boy against his father strove
for such a Lady, men unbar the door
as willingly to death as to her love;
- 61 And in the spiritual court, before
his father's face, united with her stood,
whereon from day to day he loved her more.
- 64 Reft of first husband she in widowhood
till after the eleven hundredth year,
contemned, obscure, awaited him unwooed;
- 67 Nor aught availed that men of her should hear
as with Amyclas found unterrified
by voice of him who struck the world with fear;
- [70 Nor aught availed her faith and courage tried,
so that, let Mary at the foot remain,
she mounted up where Christ was crucified.
- 73 But lest too enigmatic be my strain,
from my long parable shalt thou infer
that Poverty and Francis are these twain.

- 76 La lor concordia e i lor lieti sembianti,
amore e maraviglia e dolce sguardo
facean esser cagion di pensier santi;
- 79 Tanto che il venerabile Bernardo
si scalzò prima, e dietro a tanta pace
corse, e correndo gli parv' esser tardo.
- 82 O ignota ricchezza, o ben ferace!
scalzasi Egidio, scalzasi Silvestro,
dietro allo sposo; sì la sposa piace.
- 85 Indi sen va quel padre e quel maestro
con la sua donna, e con quella famiglia
che già legava l' umile capestro;
- 88 Nè gli gravò viltà di cor le ciglia,
per esser fi' di Pietro Bernardone,
nè per parer dispetto a maraviglia.
- 91 Ma regalmente sua dura intenzione
ad Innocenzio aperse, e da lui ebbe
primo sigillo a sua religione.
- 94 Poi che la gente poverella crebbe
dietro a costui, la cui mirabil vita
meglio in gloria del ciel si canterebbe,
- 97 Di seconda corona redimita
fu per Onorio dall' eterno spiro
la santa voglia d' esto archimandrita:
- 100 E poi che, per la sete del martiro,
nella presenza del Soldan superba
predicò Cristo e gli altri che il seguirono;
- 103 E per trovare a conversione acerba
troppo la gente, per non stare indarno,
reddissi al frutto dell' italica erba;
- 106 Nel crudo sasso intra Tevere ed Arno
da Cristo prese l' ultimo sigillo,
che le sue membra due anni portarno.
- 109 Quando a colui ch' a tanto ben sortillo,
piacque di trarlo suso alla mercede,
ch' ei meritò nel suo farsi pusillo,
- 112 Ai frati suoi, sì com' a giuste erede,
raccomandò la sua donna più cara,
e comandò che l' amassero a fede;

- 76 So blithe and so harmonious they were,
their love, their wonder, their communion sweet
in all around set holy thoughts astir;
- 79 Whence venerable Bernard first thought meet
to go unshod, and after so great peace
he ran, and running blamed his lagging feet.
- 82 O wealth untold, good fruitful of increase!
Giles bares his feet, Sylvester his, behind
the Bridegroom, such the Bride's peculiar grace.
- 85 Then with his Lady and with the house assigned,
all with the humble cord begirded now,
went forth that Father and that Master kind;
- 88 Nor did he cravenly abase his brow
as son of Peter Bernardone, or feel
cast down by strange contempt. But his stern vow
- 91 With regal dignity did he reveal
to Innocent the Pope, by whom was granted
for his religious order the first seal.
- 94 As multiplied the poor folk who had panted
to follow him whose life-work marvellous
were better in the glory of Heaven chanted,
- 97 This Master-shepherd's holy zeal for us
was sealed with crown of the Eternal Spirit
a second time through Pope Honorius.
- 100 Then preached he to the Soldan proud (to merit
the palm of martyrdom he would have borne)
Christ and his followers; but since to hear it
- 103 He found unripe that folk, who put to scorn
salvation, and lest vain should be the quest,
returned to harvest of the Italian corn;
- 106 'Twixt Tiber and Arno on the rocky crest
from Christ's own hand the final seal he won,
borne for two years upon his limbs impressed.
- 109 When God, allotting him such benison,
vouchsafed to draw him to the meed above
that he had gained by being a lowly one,
- 112 Unto his brethren, as right heirs thereof,
bequeathed he all his wealth, his Lady dear,
bidding them hold fidelity in love;

- 115 E del suo grembo l'anima preclara
mover si volle, tornando al suo regno,
ed al suo corpo non volle altra bara.
- 118 Pensa oramai qual fu colui che degno
collega fu a mantener la barca
di Pietro in alto mar per dritto segno!
- 121 E questi fu il nostro patriarca;
per che qual segue lui com'ei comanda,
discerner puoi che buone mercede carca.
- 124 Ma il suo peculio di nuova vivanda
è fatto ghiotto sì ch'esser non puote
che per diversi salti non si spanda;
- 127 E quanto le sue pecore remote
e vagabonde più da esso vanno,
più tornano all'ovile di latte vote.
- 130 Ben son di quelle che temono il danno,
e stringonsi al pastor; ma son sì poche,
che le cappe fornisce poco panno.
- 133 Or se le mie parole non son fioche,
se la tua audienza è stata attenta,
se ciò ch'ho detto alla mente rivoche,
- 136 In parte fia la tua voglia contenta,
perchè vedrai la pianta onde si scheggia,
e vedrai il coreggier che argomenta,
- 139 "U' ben s'impingua, se non si vaneggia." "

- 115 And from her breast the lofty spirit clear
desired to pass to its own realm divine,
and for its body willed no other bier.
- 118 Judge now the worth of one who could combine
with him to pilot over the high seas
the Bark of Peter by the starry sign!
- 121 Such was our Patriarch; and they who please
to follow him, obeying his command,
take on such freight of good commodities.
- 124 But now so greedy is become his band
for novel fodder, nothing can withhold
the sheep from roaming through wild pastureland;
- 127 And these, the more by distant lure cajoled,
and truant more from him in field and wood,
emptier of milk return they to the fold.
- 130 Some truly, boding evil likelihood,
cleave closely to the Shepherd, but so few
that scanty cloth would furnish every hood.
- 133 Now if my words not feeble are, if due
hearing thou gavest them with mind entire,
and if the memory call them up anew,
- 136 In part contented shall be thy desire,
seeing the plant with scions torn away,
and seeing what signifies the qualifier:
- 139 "Fair is the fattening, *if they do not stray.*"

NOTES

ll. 1-12. The *Aphorisms of Hippocrates* was the great text-book for medical students; at Montpellier, in the full tide of the Renaissance more than two centuries after Dante, Rabelais still had to study it. It is noticeable that Dante mentions the professions of law, medicine, priesthood, diplomacy, politics, and theft all in the same context. In some old MSS. the reference to the priesthood is erased! In *Convivio* iii. 11, he had said: 'He should not be called a true philosopher who is friend of wisdom merely for practical purposes (*per utilità*), as are lawyers, physicians, and almost all the professors of religion (*li religiosi*) who study not to know but to gain money or advancement.' *Acquistar moneta o dignità*: words that have the snap of a whip!

l. 16. St. Thomas Aquinas, Doctor Angelicus.

ll. 25-6. Canto x, ll. 96, 114.

l. 26. Oxford text reads: *nacque*.

ll. 37-9. Francis is likened to 'the rapt seraph that adores and burns'; Dominic, preoccupied with doctrine, is 'a splendour of cherubic light'. St. Thomas Aquinas (who, it should be remembered, is the speaker) in his *Summa* defines *Seraphim* as by derivation signifying 'ardour of love' and *Cherubim* as so named for their knowledge.

ll. 43 ff. Assisi lies out on the mountainside facing westward toward Perugia, whose old southeast sungate (Porta Solè) lets in the reflected glare of summer heat and winter snow from Monte Subasio, a spur of Apennine rising behind Assisi to a height of more than four thousand feet. Between this mountain and the Roman Apennines to the east in the narrow valley lie shadowed Gualdo and Nocera washed by the Topino. This little river, whose course resembles that of upper Arno, flows southward until, escaping from the mountains and curving in a sharp elbow round Monte Subasio, it shapes its course north-westward to join the Tiber, but not until it has received the Chiascio flowing down from the hills about Gubbio, on one of which was the hermitage of St. Ubald. To those familiar with that district the Poet presents a picture. The map of Italy contains the materials of poetry in 'God's plenty'.

ll. 52-4. Assisi, supposed to be derived from 'Ascesi' (I rose); there is also allusion to Zacharias vi. 12 (*Vulgate*): 'Behold a man the *Orient* is his name' (Ecce vir *Oriens* nomen ejus).

ll. 58 ff. He loved the Lady Poverty, but the father opposed the match.

l. 64. The Lady's first husband was Christ.

l. 68. Caesar, in a crisis of his struggle with Pompey, being in need of a boat, knocks at night at the wretched hut of the poor fisherman, Amyclas, who was not in the least startled. Dante found the anecdote in the *Pharsalia* of Lucan (v. 515-31), and dwells upon it in the *Convivio*, iv. 13: 'The empty-handed traveller would sing in the very presence of robbers'—as indeed Francis is reported to have done.

ll. 70-2. This parable of the marriage with Lady Poverty, the central idea of Francis as it is the culminating point of the Canto, has been handled by modern textual critics and commentators with defective sympathy. The Italian *Testo Critico* of 1921 reads 'pianse in su la croce' (wept upon the cross). It is true that some of the best and oldest manuscripts so read, but equally true that the best early commentators read *salse* (mounted). Passing over weighty considerations in favour of what Dr. Edward Moore terms the bolder, and therefore more probable, metaphor, 'mounted', I have to call attention to the very words of the saint himself—words strangely overlooked by commentators—upon which Dante obviously bases the noble line: 'During thy passion she alone did not forsake Thee. Mary thy mother stopped at the foot of the cross, but Poverty mounted it with Thee and clasped Thee . . .' The whole wonderful prayer is given in the fine article, 'Francis of Assisi', in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Eleventh Edition; in the later edition the prayer is omitted). The reader of that article will, indeed, find these notes hardly necessary.

l. 93. Sealed by the Church.

l. 96. Not merely thus related, but sung by the Seraphic choirs.

l. 98. Sealed by the Holy Spirit.

ll. 106-8. Sealed with the stigmata of the Crucified God. The seat of the order, founded by Francis on the rocky crest of La Verna, is a lovely place to which men of every faith can make devout pilgrimage.

l. 118. Judge of the worth of my master Dominic, worthy colleague of such a saint.

l. 124. Degenerate Dominican friars.

ll. 138-9. The qualifier is the subjoined clause, which has now been explained as promised. The line is repeated from x. 96.

CANTO DECIMOSECONDO

- 1 Sì tosto come l'ultima parola
la benedetta fiamma per dir tolse,
a rotar cominciò la santa mola;
- 4 E nel suo giro tutta non si volse
prima ch' un' altra di cerchio la chiuse,
e moto a moto, e canto a canto colse;
- 7 Canto, che tanto vince nostre Muse,
nostre Sirene, in quelle dolci tube,
quanto primo splendor quel ch' ei refuse.
- 10 Come si volgon per tenera nube
due archi paralleli e concolori,
quando Junone a sua ancella iube,
- 13 Nascendo di quel d' entro quel di fuori,
a guisa del parlar di quella vaga,
ch' amor consunse come sol vapori;
- 16 E fanno qui la gente esser presaga,
per lo patto che Dio con Noè pose,
del mondo che giammai più non si allaga:
- 19 Così di quelle sempiterne rose
volgeansi circa noi le due ghirlande,
e sì l' estrema all' intima rispose.
- 22 Poichè il tripudio e l' alta festa grande,
sì del cantare e sì del fiammeggiarsi,
luce con luce gaudiose e blande,
- 25 Insieme a punto ed a voler quietarsi,
pur come gli occhi ch' al piacer che i move
conviene insieme chiudere e levarsi,
- 28 Del cor dell' una delle luci nuove
si mosse voce, che l' ago alla stella
parer mi fece in volgermi al suo dove;
- 31 E cominciò: 'L' amor che mi fa bella
mi tragge a ragionar dall' altro duca,
per cui del mio sì ben ci si favella.
- 34 Degno è che dove l' un, l' altro s' induca,
sì che com' elli ad una militaro,
così la gloria loro insieme luca.

CANTO XII

St. Bonaventura in praise of St. Dominic

- 1 Before the final cadence ceased to sound
forth from the blessèd spirits radiant,
began the holy millstone to whirl round,
4 But of full circling something yet did want,
when now another ring around it fuses
and matches dance with dancing, chant with chant,
7 Chant that as passing far excels our muses,
our sirens, in those mellow flutings blew,
as the first sunbeam by reflection loses.
10 As curve two bows the filmy cloud-rack through,
both parallel in line and colour, done
as Juno bids her maid the picture do,
13 The outer taking birth from the inner one
in hues reëchoed like that wandering voice
consumed by love, as vapour by the sun,
16 Giving mankind a signal to rejoice
that what God promised Noah shall abide,
whence deluge nevermore the world destroys:
19 So the two garlands bright about us plied
of roses an eternal coronal,
and the outer to the inner so replied.
22 Then, when the dance and lofty festival
both of the flaming lights and of the quires
light beside light jocund and blithesome, all
25 Of one accord grew quiet, song and fires
(even as the eyelids cannot choose but shut
or lift themselves again as will requires),
28 From one of the new lights a voice came out,
which made me, needle to that pole, incline
my body round toward its whereabouts;
31 And it began: 'The Love that makes me shine
prompts me to laud the other Leader great,
for whose sake here is spoken fair of mine.
34 Each with the other should be celebrate
that, as united they were militant,
their glory may together radiate.

- 37 L' esercito di CRISTO, che sì caro
costò a riarmar, dietro all' insegna
si movea tardo, suspiccioso e raro;
40 Quando lo imperador che sempre regna,
provvide alla milizia ch' era in forse,
per sola grazia, non per esser degna;
43 E com' è detto, a sua sposa soccorse
con due campioni, al cui fare, al cui dire
lo popol disviato si raccorse.
46 In quella parte ove surge ad aprire
Zeffiro dolce le novelle fronde,
di che si vede Europa rivestire,
49 Non molto lungi al percoter dell' onde,
dietro alle quali, per la lunga foga,
lo sol tal volta ad ogni uom si nasconde,
52 Siede la fortunata Calaroga,
sotto la protezion del grande scudo,
in che soggiace il leone e soggioga.
55 Dentro vi nacque l' amoroso drudo
della fede cristiana, il santo atleta,
benigno ai suoi, ed ai nemici crudo;
58 E come fu creata, fu repleta
sì la sua mente di viva virtute,
che nella madre lei fece profeta.
61 Poichè le sponsalizie fur compiute
al sacro fonte intra lui e la fede,
u' si dotar di mutua salute;
64 La donna che per lui l' assenso diede,
vide nel sonno il mirabile frutto
ch' uscir dovea di lui e delle erede;
67 E perchè fosse quale era in costrutto,
quinci si mosse spirito a nomarlo
del possessivo di cui era tutto.
70 Dominico fu detto; ed io ne parlo
sì come dell' agricola che CRISTO
elesse all' orto suo per aiutarlo.
73 Ben parve messo e famigliar di CRISTO;
chè il primo amor che in lui fu manifesto
fu al primo consiglio che diè CRISTO.

- 37 The army of Christ, at cost exorbitant
equipped anew, was moving slow of pace
mistrustful, and too few the flag to plant,
40 When He who kings it over time and space
provided for His knighthood jeopardied,
not for their worth, but only of His Grace;
43 Coming, as said, to succour of His Bride
with champions twain, whose prowess and behest
rallied the stragglers who had turned aside.
46 Where first the winds breathe gently from the west
to open the fresh foliage of spring,
whence smiles Europa being newly dressed,
49 Not far from where the waves are thundering
wherein the sun, because his course is great,
somewhile from man concealed is slumbering,
52 There Calahorra sits, the fortunate,
protected by the great escutcheon where
the lion doth succumb and subjugate.
55 Therein was brought to birth the lover dear
of Christian Faith, athlete in holiness,
kind to his own, to enemies severe.
58 Such life-power in his mother did possess
the infant spirit at its first creation
as to transform her to a prophetess.
61 Fulfilled at holy font the declaration
between him and the Faith, of sacrament
wherein each pledged the other with salvation,
64 The woman who for him had given assent
beheld the admirable fruit, in dream,
of him and of his heirs; and with intent
67 That what he was he might in grammar seem,
a spirit went bearing the possessive word
of his Possessor hence to christen him,
70 And called him Dominic: for I record
the story of the husbandman whom Christ
chose for his aid in vineyard of the Lord.
73 True messenger he seemed and friend of Christ,
for the first love obtaining masterdom
in him, was the first counsel given by Christ.

- 76 Spesse fiate fu tacito e desto
trovato in terra dalla sua nutrice,
come dicesse: "Io son venuto a questo."
- 79 O padre suo veramente Felice!
O madre sua veramente Giovanna,
se interpretata val come si dice!
- 82 Non per lo mondo, per cui mo s' affanna
diretro ad Ostiense ed a Taddeo,
ma per amor della verace manna,
- 85 In picciol tempo gran dottor si feo,
tal che si mise a circuir la vigna,
che tosto imbianca, se il vignaio è reo;
- 88 Ed alla sedia che già fu benigna
più ai poveri giusti (non per lei,
ma per colui che siede, che traligna),
- 91 Non dispensare o due o tre per sei,
non la fortuna di prima vacante,
non *decimas quae sunt pauperum Dei*,
- 94 Addomandò; ma contro al mondo errante
licenza di combatter per lo seme,
del qual ti fascian ventiquattro piante.
- 97 Poi con dottrina e con volere insieme
con l' officio apostolico si mosse,
quasi torrente ch' alta vena preme,
- 100 E negli sterpi eretici percosse
l' impeto suo, più vivamente quivi
dove le resistenze eran più grosse.
- 103 Di lui si fecer poi diversi rivi,
onde l' orto cattolico si riga,
sì che i suoi arbuscelli stan più vivi.
- 106 Se tal fu l' una rota della biga,
in che la Santa Chiesa si difese,
e vinse in campo la sua civil briga,
- 109 Ben ti dovrebbe assai esser palese
l' eccellenza dell' altra, di cui Tomma
dinanzi al mio venir fu sì cortese.
- 112 Ma l' orbita che fe' la parte somma
di sua circonferenza, è derelitta,
sì ch' è la muffa dov' era la gromma

- 76 His nurse discovered him, awake and dumb,
many a time recumbent on the ground,
as who should say, "To this end am I come!"
- 79 O thou, his father, Felix truly found!
and thou, his mother, verily art Joan,
if that interpretation be the sound.
- 82 Not as men now are spent for worldly boon
following Thaddeus and the Ostian,
but, loving the true manna, very soon
- 85 He grew a mighty teacher, and began
about the vineyard to be vigilant,
where bleach the vines if bad the husbandman;
- 88 And of the Seat that once to righteous want
benigner was (not by her own offence
but that of her degenerate occupant!),
- 91 He begged,—not two or three for six dispense,
not income of first vacant benefice,
not tithes, of God's own poor the competence,—
- 94 But leave against the world, that goes amiss,
to battle for the Faith, from seed whereof
sprangtwicetwelveplants thatgarland thee with bliss.
- 97 Then, both with learning and with zealous love,
by apostolical authority,
like torrent urged by fountain up above,
- 100 Dashed in among the shoots of heresy,
smiting with greater vehemence, the more
resistance proved to be refractory.
- 103 From him thenceforward various runnels pour
to irrigate the Catholic garden spot,
making its bushes greener than before.
- 106 If such was one wheel of the Chariot
wherein rode Holy Church for her defence
over the field where civil strife was hot,
- 109 Clearly shouldst thou perceive the excellence
of the other wheel, which Thomas had discussed
before I came, with courteous eloquence.
- 112 But, where the outmost rim its pressure thrust,
the track is now deserted by the wheel,
so that there is the mould where was the crust.

- 115 La sua famiglia, che si mosse dritta
coi piedi alle sue orme, è tanto volta,
che quel dinanzi a quel dietro gitta;
- 118 E tosto si vedrà della ricolta
della mala cultura, quando il loglio
si lagnerà che l'arca gli sia tolta.
- 121 Ben dico, chi cercasse a foglio a foglio
nostro volume, ancor troveria carta
u' leggerebbe: "Io mi son quel ch'io soglio."
- 124 Ma non fia da Casal, nè d'Acquasparta,
là onde vegnon tali alla scrittura,
che l'un la fugge, e l'altro la coarta.
- 127 Io son la vita di Bonaventura
da Bagnoregio, che nei grandi uffici
sempre posposi la sinistra cura.
- 130 Illuminato ed Augustin son quici,
che fur dei primi scalzi poverelli,
che nel capestro a Dio si fero amici.
- 133 Ugo da San Vittore è qui con elli,
e Pietro Mangiadore, e Pietro Ispano
lo qual giù luce in dodici libelli;
- 136 Natan profeta, e il metropolitano
Crisostomo, ed Anselmo, e quel Donato
ch' alla prim' arte degnò por la mano;
- 139 Rabano è qui, e lucemi da lato
il Calabrese abate Gioacchino,
di spirito profetico dotato.
- 142 Ad inveggiar cotanto paladino
mi mosse la infiammata cortesia
di fra Tommaso, e il discreto latino;
- 145 E mosse meco questa compagnia.'

- 115 His household, who set forth with footing leal
upon his footprints, now are turned again
so that they cast the toe upon the heel.
- 118 And soon the crop will prove, when gathered in,
how bad the tillage when the tares will weep
because they are excluded from the bin.
- 121 Yet any eyes that through our volume sweep
leaf after leaf, will on some page have caught
the legend still: "Unto my vow I keep."
- 124 But from Casale or Acquasparta not,
whence come such as the writing so apply
that one evades, the other draws it taut.
- 127 The effluence of Bonaventura am I,
from Bagnorea, who did evermore
put last the left-hand care in office high.
- 130 Here, of the earliest of the barefoot poor,
Illuminato and Augustin, made dear
to God while circled with the cord of yore.
- 133 Hugh of Saint Victor is among them here,
and Peter Mangiadore, and Peter of Spain
who in twelve books down there is shining clear,
- 136 The Prophet Nathan, Metropolitan
Chrysostom, Anselm, that Donatus who
stooped to the first art, a grammarian;
- 139 Here is Rabanus, here beside me too
shines the Calabrian abbot Joachim,
gifted with spirit of prophetic view.
- 142 In rivalry such paladin to hymn,
moved me with courtesy-enkindled mood
Friar Thomas, by the fair discourse of him,
- 145 And with me prompted all this brotherhood.'

NOTES

ll. 1-30. Rising from the mood of depression incident to the conclusion of the preceding Canto, our Poet here soars up into 'the high reason of his fancies with his garlands and singing-robes about him'.

l. 15. When Love had sun-dried all the moisture of her body, Echo was mercifully transformed to a cliff about which her voice for ever wanders.

l. 19. The great Doctors of the Divine forming a double halo of circling and singing flames.

l. 29. The incidental reference to the magnetic needle gives proof that the mariner's compass was familiar to Italians of the thirteenth century.

l. 31. Speaks the Franciscan Doctor Seraphicus, St. Bonaventura, in praise of Dominic.

ll. 35 ff. The military imagery of these lines is certainly more in harmony with the character and methods of Dominic than with those of his far more Christ-like contemporary, Francis. But Dante deemed the deplorable corruption of the clergy to spring from laxity of doctrine; the Church required the support of the stern measures of Dominic. Although the latter seems a less poetic figure than Francis, it is significant that the Poet has lavished a greater wealth of fancy upon this Canto than upon its pendant. Here, as there, the reading of a brief sketch of the life of the hero may exempt the reader from being too frequently 'edified by the margin'.

l. 53. Royal arms of Castile.

ll. 71-5. No other word is permitted to rime with the name of Christ. Cf. the identical rime in xiv. 104; xix. 104; xxxii. 83. The first counsel was, 'sell that thou hast and give to the poor'. Matthew xix. 21.

l. 83. Authorities in medicine and canon law (the Decretals). Cf. opening passage of Canto xi.

l. 90. Boniface the Eighth.

ll. 106 ff. The two wheels of the Chariot of the Church (cf. *Purgatorio* xxix. 107). In the corresponding passage of the eulogy of Francis, St. Thomas uses the familiar symbol of Peter's bark.

l. 114. A violent shift of metaphor! Dante, like Shakespeare, often defies the rules of the rhetoricians. From the rim of the wheel to the hoop of the cask, then from the container to the contents—the wine with its mould instead of the preservative beeswing.

ll. 115-27. Line 117 has been found 'very puzzling'. Yet the reader has only to imagine a man swinging his foot round to go back on his tracks. To one who follows the Poet's swiftly changing fancies the picture is vivid indeed. For the image of the tares and the good wheat in the following *terzina*, cf. Matthew xiii. 30.

ll. 124-6. Ubertino of Casale, leader of the 'spiritual' faction of the Franciscans, was so impracticably severe in interpreting the rule that he was finally driven from the order. Matthew of Acquasparta, cardinal bishop, general of the order, and confidential agent of Boniface VIII, went to the other extreme. He was papal legate at Florence at the very time when the office of prior was held by Dante, who had good reason to suspect the crafty churchman to be no very devoted lover of the Lady Poverty. The sting of the allusion lies in the implication that the cardinal evaded the rule for personal profit.

l. 129. In his administration of the Franciscan Order and as bishop, he subordinated the temporal to the spiritual; with allusion to Proverbs iii. 16: 'in her left hand riches and honour'.

ll. 130 ff. The other lights of the outer wreath of saints. For these names cf. Toynbee's *Concise Dictionary*.

CANTO DECIMOTERZO

- 1 Immagini chi bene intender cupe
 quel ch' io or vidi (e ritenga l' image,
 mentre ch' io dico, come ferma rupe)
- 4 Quindici stelle che in diverse plage
 lo cielo avvivan di tanto sereno,
 che soperchia dell' aere ogni compage;
- 7 Immagini quel Carro a cui il seno
 basta del nostro cielo e notte e giorno,
 sì ch' al volger del temo non vien meno;
- 10 Immagini la bocca di quel corno,
 che si comincia in punta dello stelo
 a cui la prima rota va dintorno,
- 13 Aver fatto di sè due segni in cielo
 (qual fece la figliuola di Minoi
 allora che sentì di morte il gielo),
- 16 E l' un nell' altro aver li raggi suoi,
 ed ambedue girarsi per maniera,
 che l' uno andasse al prima e l' altro al poi,
- 19 Ed avrà quasi l' ombra della vera
 costellazion, e della doppia danza,
 che circolava il punto dov' io era;
- 22 Poi ch' è tanto di là da nostra usanza,
 quanto di là dal mover della Chiana
 si move il ciel che tutti gli altri avanza.
- 25 Lì si cantò non Bacco, non Peana,
 ma tre Persone in divina natura,
 ed in una persona essa e l' umana.
- 28 Compìè il cantare e il volger sua misura,
 ed attesersi a noi quei santi lumi,
 felicitando sè di cura in cura.
- 31 Ruppe il silenzio nei concordi numi
 poscia la luce, in cui mirabil vita
 del poverel di Dio narrata fumi,
- 34 E disse: 'Quando l' una paglia è trita,
 quando la sua semenza è già riposta,
 a batter l' altra dolce amor m' invita.

CANTO XIII

Discourse of the Angelic Doctor set to Celestial Music

- 1 Let him imagine, who would fain be shown
what now I saw (and hold the image fast
while I am speaking, carven as in stone!),
- 4 Fifteen stars that in various regions vast
do make the heavens alive with lustre, serving
to pierce the air, however overcast;
- 7 Imagine the great Wain whereto the curving
vault of our heaven is so ample, night and morn,
that from the veering tongue 'tis never swerving;
- 10 Imagine too the broad bell of that Horn
beginning at the axle-hub, whereby
the first revolving sphere is round us borne:
- 13 These to have made two clusters in the sky,
like that which the daughter of Minos fashioned
when, chilled, she felt herself about to die,—
- 16 One cluster with the other garlanded
and in such fashion whirling both the two
that one was leader and the other led:
- 19 Then will he have some shadow of the true
star clusters, as in counter-dance they gleam,
circling the point that I was rooted to,
- 22 Since these outstrip the things we see or dream,
as does that Heaven which is the swiftest o'er us
the moving of Chiana's oozy stream.
- 25 Not Bacchus, not Apollo was their chorus,
but Persons three in being all divine,
in one, divine and human, to restore us.
- 28 The song and circle measured, turned in fine
to us those holy lustres, more by token
passing from heed to heed with joy benign.
- 31 'Mid those concordant powers was silence broken
then by that light whence the achievements of
the marvellous mendicant of God were spoken:
- 34 'One sheaf being thrashed,' the words fell from above,
'and that its grain is to the garner gone,
to beat the other beckons me dear love.

- 37 Tu credi che nel petto, onde la costa
si trasse per formar la bella guancia,
il cui palato a tutto il mondo costa,
40 Ed in quel che, forato dalla lancia,
e poscia e prima tanto satisfece,
che d'ogni colpa vince la bilancia,
43 Quantunque alla natura umana lece
aver di lume, tutto fosse infuso
da quel valor che l'uno e l'altro fece:
46 E però ammiri ciò ch' io dissi suso,
quando narrai che non ebbe il secondo
lo ben che nella quinta luce è chiuso.
49 Ora apri gli occhi a quel ch' io ti rispondo,
e vedrai il tuo credere e il mio dire
nel vero farsi come centro in tondo.
52 Ciò che non more, e ciò che può morire,
non è se non splendor di quella idea
che partorisce, amando, il nostro Sire;
55 Chè quella viva luce che sì mea
dal suo lucente, che non si disuna
da lui, nè dall' amor che a lor s' intrea,
58 Per sua bontate il suo raggiare aduna,
quasi specchiato, in nove sussistenze,
eternalmente rimanendosi una.
61 Quindi discende all' ultime potenze
giù d'atto in atto tanto divenendo,
che più non fa che brevi contingenze;
64 E queste contingenze essere intendo
le cose generate, che produce
con seme, e senza seme il ciel movendo.
67 La cera di costoro, e chi la duce,
non sta d'un modo, e però sotto il segno
ideale poi più e men traluce:
70 Ond' egli avvien ch' un medesimo legno,
secondo specie, meglio e peggio frutta;
e voi nascete con diverso ingegno.
73 Se fosse a punto la cera dedutta,
e fosse il cielo in sua virtù suprema,
la luce del suggel parrebbe tutta:

- 37 Thou thinkest of the bosom whence was drawn
the rib wherewith to fashion the fair face
whose palate cost the world so dear a pawn,—
40 And of that lance-pierced bosom, by whose grace
sin past and future was so compensated
that the atonement in the scale outweighs,—
43 Thou thinkest man may be illuminated
by no more light than was infused in those
by that same Power who both of them created:
46 And hence thy wonder when my story goes
that the Fifth Light with vision so profound
was gifted, that "No second ever rose".
49 Open thine eyes now and behold how bound
is thy belief with what I shall reply,
both in the truth like centre in the round.
52 That which can die, and that which cannot die,
are nothing save the splendour of that Word
in love begotten by our Father High;
55 Because that Living Light which is transferred
so from its Source, it may not be undone
from it or from that Love which is their third,
58 Its mirrored rays by its own benison
in nine subsistencies together brings,
itself eternally abiding One.
61 Thence passes through successive lowerings
to the ultimate potential elements,
producing naught but brief contingent things;
64 And these contingent things I take in sense
of generated things, in seedlessness
or seed produced, through heavenly influence.
67 The wax of these things with the plastic stress
stands not at one,—its trace may be defined
beneath the ideal pattern, more and less.
70 Whence comes about that, after its own kind,
the selfsame tree bears worse and better fruit,
and ye are born endowed with various mind.
73 Now were the wax exactly worked to suit,
did stars supreme their influence assemble,
the lustre of the seal were absolute;

- 76 Ma la natura la dà sempre scema,
similmente operando all' artista,
ch' ha l' abito dell' arte, e man che trema.
- 79 Però se il caldo amor la chiara vista
della prima virtù dispone e segna,
tutta la perfezion quivi s' acquista.
- 82 Così fu fatta già la terra degna
di tutta l' animal perfezione;
così fu fatta la Vergine pregna.
- 85 Sì ch' io commendo tua opinione:
che l' umana natura mai non fue,
nè fia, qual fu in quelle due persone.
- 88 Or s' io non procedessi avanti piùè,
“Dunque come costui fu senza pare?”
comincerebber le parole tue.
- 91 Ma perchè paia ben ciò che non pare,
pensa chi era, e la cagion che il mosse,
quando fu detto, “Chiedi”, a domandare.
- 94 Non ho parlato sì che tu non posse
ben veder ch' ei fu re, che chiese senno,
acciocchè re sufficiente fosse;
- 97 Non per saper lo numero in che enno
li motor di quassù, o se *necesse*
con contingente mai *necesse* fenno;
- 100 Non *si est dare primum motum esse*,
o se del mezzo cerchio far si puote
triangol sì ch' un retto non avesse.
- 103 Onde, se ciò ch' io dissi e questo note,
regal prudenza è quel vedere impari,
in che lo stral di mia intenzion percote.
- 106 E, se al *Surse* drizzi gli occhi chiari,
vedrai aver solamente rispetto
ai regi, che son molti, e i buon son rari.
- 109 Con questa distinzion prendi il mio detto,
e così puote star con quel che credi
del primo padre e del nostro diletto.
- 112 E questo ti sia sempre piombo ai piedi,
per farti mover lento, com' uom lasso,
ed al sì ed al no, che tu non vedi;

- 76 But Nature mars,—wherein she doth resemble
the craftsman who about his labour goes
and keeps the knack, although his fingers tremble.
- 79 Yet if the fervent Love seal and dispose
clear insight of the Primal Power, achieved
perfection on that substance fully shows.
- 82 Dust of the ground, made worthy thus, received
full animal perfection once therethrough;
thus wrought upon, the Virgin once conceived.
- 85 So that I give my sanction to thy view
that human nature never yet has been,
nor can be, such as in those persons two.
- 88 Now if no farther forward should I win,
“How then consider him without a peer?”
upon this question would thy words begin.
- 91 But to see clearly what is not yet clear,
think who he was and why petitioning
when he was bidden ask the guerdon dear.
- 94 Thus have I spoken but exhibiting
that he was king, and asked for plenitude
of wisdom to become a worthy king,—
- 97 Not for the number of the multitude
moving these spheres, nor if *necesse* chained
with a contingent ever could conclude,
- 100 Nor if prime motion is to be maintained,
nor if in semicircle could be drawn
triangle, save right angle be retained.
- 103 Whence, taking this with my discourse foregone,
a kingly prudence is that peerless prize
the shaft of my intention hits upon.
- 106 And if on “rose” thou turnst discerning eyes,
thou wilt perceive that it is spoken of
kings,—who are many, and but few the wise.
- 09 Thus qualified, in what I said above
agreement with thy view is found complete
as to our primal Sire and Him we love.
- 12 Let this be ever lead upon thy feet
to make thee like a weary man move slow
when *Yes* and *No* the inner vision cheat;

115 Chè quegli è tra gli stolti bene abbasso,
che senza distinzion afferma o nega,
nell' un così come nell' altro passo;

118 Perch' egl' incontra che più volte piega
l' opinion corrente in falsa parte,
e poi l' affetto lo intelletto lega.

121 Vie più che indarno da riva si parte,
perchè non torna tal qual ei si move,
chi pesca per lo vero e non ha l' arte:

124 E di ciò sono al mondo aperte prove
Parmenide, Melisso, Brisso e molti
i quali andavano, e non sapean dove.

127 Sì fe' Sabellio ed Arrio, e quegli stolti
che furon come spade alle scritture
in render torti li diritti volti.

130 Non sien le genti ancor troppo sicure
a giudicar, sì come quei che stima
le biade in campo pria che sien mature;

133 Ch' io ho veduto tutto il verno prima
il prun mostrarsi rigido e feroce,
poscia portar la rosa in sulla cima;

136 E legno vidi già dritto e veloce
correr lo mar per tutto suo cammino,
perire al fine all' entrar della foce.

139 Non creda donna Berta o ser Martino
per vedere un furare, altro offerere,
vedergli dentro al consiglio divino;

142 Chè quel può surgere, e quel può cadere.'

- 115 For he among the fools is very low
 who affirms or who denies in either kind
 without distinction of the *Yes* and *No*,
118 Since often to false bias are inclined
 opinions men too hastily attain,
 and mere conceit then trammels up the mind.
121 His putting forth from shore is worse than vain
 who wanting skill goes fishing for the true,
 since as he went returns he not again;
124 Melissus gives the proof of this to view,
 and Bryson and Parmenides, who recked
 not of their goal, however fast they flew.
127 So with Sabellius, Arius, and each sect
 of fools who were as swords to Scripture pure,
 distorting features otherwise correct.
130 Let folk in judgement never be too sure,
 as when into the field the peasant goes
 to reckon up the ears not yet mature;
133 For I have seen beneath the winter snows
 the wild brier rugged seem, and troublesome,
 and then upon its summit bear the rose;
136 And once I saw a gallant vessel come
 straight over-seas, completing her emprise,
 to perish entering the port at home.
139 Seeing one thief, another sacrifice,
 let not Dame Joan and Gaffer John presume
 to penetrate them with divining eyes,
142 For one may rise, the other fall to doom.'

NOTES

ll. 1-24. There are some who can never read this vast period (perhaps the longest in the Poem) without an upleap of heart. The mighty sweep of the twelve opening lines is in harmony with that of the northern heaven as visible to us on a clear calm night; the relative diffuseness is true to the impression made by those unsounded interspaces between the solemn stars.

l. 10. The Horn is the constellation of the Little Bear, the small end of the horn or trumpet being the pole-star. In Chapter XX of *Don Quixote*, Sancho refers to '*la boca de la Bocina*', 'the mouth of the buccina'; and Lope de Vega mentions '*el carro y la bocina*', 'the Wain and the Horn'.

ll. 13-18. The seven stars of the Dipper (Charles's Wain), the two at the mouth of that Horn which begins at the North Star, and fifteen stars of first magnitude are to be fancied as forming two concentric clusters, like the Crown of Ariadne, whirling together.

l. 24. See note about the Chiana, *Inferno* xxix.

ll. 34 ff. St. Thomas Aquinas now explains his attribution of highest wisdom to Solomon (x. 114).

ll. 37-48. Adam and Christ, both direct creations of the Divine, must have been superior in wisdom to Solomon. The words cited at end of l. 48 of the English version repeat the '*non surse il secondo*' of Canto x, l. 114.

ll. 52 ff. 'A religious hymn breathing the sense of mystery that surrounds the Divine' (Torraca).

ll. 67-72. Whatever is produced by the 'plastic stress' of the moving heavens is compared to wax, and the comparison, developed into a continued metaphor, does duty as an argument. Every one who respected himself then had his signet; no document was valid without the seal; no amount of wit could rail the seal from off the bond. The peculiar relation of signet and wax lent the resultant metaphor such various significance that its frequent use in poetry became inevitable. In Shakespeare as in Dante it is common, though never commonplace.

ll. 73-8. As the creative idea, the seal, is handed down from sphere to sphere, it finds the wax less perfectly tempered to receive the impression, while the secondary creative powers (vaguely termed Nature) are like the skilful craftsman who cannot quite control the tremor of his hands. Natural products are all, it seems, subject to some flaw. Cf. the latter part of Canto viii.

ll. 91 ff. St. Thomas now 'distinguishes'. Cf. the beautiful story of the dream of Solomon at Gibeon, 1 Kings iii.

ll. 97-102. The four highest branches of knowledge, as taught at the University, were theology, logic, metaphysic, geometry. As examples of what Solomon might have asked, one problem is cited from each one of these sciences. The second question involves the logical problem whether in the syllogism a necessary premiss coupled with a contingent one can ever result in a necessary conclusion. Any such syllogism conceals a quibble.

ll. 103 ff. Solomon asked and got practical wisdom for his trade of king.

l. 106. Cf. l. 48 and note.

ll. 116-117. Here, as in l. 109 and in Canto xi, l. 27, Dante uses the words *distinction*, *distinguish* as technical terms of logic. The premisses must be sharply scrutinized before proceeding to any inference.

ll. 121-3. Here St. Thomas, possibly feeling that he has already been somewhat discursive, does not succeed in saying quite all that he means. Obviously, an unskilful fisherman may return as he went—that is empty-handed. Does not Fitz-Gerald's Omar tell us that such was the case with his quest for the truth when he did eagerly frequent doctor and saint? But what our present saint has in mind is the converse danger of getting one's net encumbered with monsters of the speculative deep, such as the sharks of heresy.

ll. 124-31. Of the three Greek philosophers Aristotle had spoken with severity; the doctrines of the two Christian theologians had been condemned by councils of the Church: that seemed to Dante sufficient basis for using them as examples. It would be wrong in us, who live in an age enlightened by historical criticism, to treat the Poet as he treats these celebrated thinkers, else we might with some justice accuse him of the very fault he is condemning.

CANTO DECIMOQUARTO

- 1 Dal centro al cerchio, e sì dal cerchio al centro,
movesi l'acqua in un ritondo vaso,
secondo ch'è percossa fuori o dentro.
- 4 Nella mia mente fe' subito caso
questo ch'io dico, sì come si tacque
la gloriosa vita di Tommaso,
- 7 Per la similitudine che nacque
del suo parlare e di quel di Beatrice,
a cui sì cominciar dopo lui piacque:
- 10 'A costui fa mestieri, e nol vi dice
nè con la voce, nè pensando ancora,
d'un altro vero andare alla radice.
- 13 Ditegli se la luce, onde s'infiora
vostra sustanzia, rimarrà con voi
eternalmente sì com'ella è ora;
- 16 E se rimane, dite come, poi
che sarete visibili rifatti,
esser potrà ch'al veder non vi noi.'
- 19 Come da più letizia pinti e tratti
alla fiata quei che vanno a rota
levan la voce, e rallegrano gli atti;
- 22 Così all'orazion pronta e devota
li santi cerchi mostrar nuova gioia
nel tornear e nella mira nota.
- 25 Qual si lamenta perchè qui si moia,
per viver colassù, non vide quive
lo refrigerio dell'eterna ploia.
- 28 Quell'uno e due e tre che sempre vive,
e regna sempre in tre e due ed uno,
non circoscritto, e tutto circonscrive,
- 31 Tre volte era cantato da ciascuno
di quegli spirti con tal melodia,
ch'ad ogni merto saria giusto muno.
- 34 Ed io udi' nella luce più dia
del minor cerchio una voce modesta,
forse qual fu dall'Angelo a Maria,

CANTO XIV

The Spiritual Body. Galaxy of the Cross in Mars

- 1 From centre unto rim, or back about,
vibrates the water in a rounded vase,
as smitten from within or from without.
- 4 Into my mind came suddenly the case
that here I moot, soon as the effluence
of glorious Saint Thomas held his peace,
- 7 Because of likeness in the incidence
of his discourse and that of Beatrice,
whom it pleased after him thus to commence:
- 10 'This man has need (yet does not tell you this
either by voice or thinking) to pursue
another truth to where it rooted is.
- 13 Inform him if the light which doth endue
your substance with its blossom, will remain
as now it is for evermore with you;
- 16 And if it shall remain with you, explain
how ye can bear it and conserve your sight
when ye shall be made visible again.'
- 19 Just as, impelled by urgency of delight,
they who are wheeling in the dance as one,
lift up the voice and make the movement light,
- 22 So at the prompt devoted orison
the holy rings gave proof of rapture new,
turning in wondrous choral unison.
- 25 Whoso laments our death down here, therethrough
to win new life above, did never see
refreshment there of the eternal dew.
- 28 That ever-living One and Two and Three
reigning in Three Two One beyond all date,
unbounded and all-bounding Trinity,
- 31 Did each among those spirits celebrate
three times, with such melodious utterance
as were fit meed for merit passing great.
- 34 And where divinest was the radiance
of the inner ring, a quiet voice replies
(to Mary such the Angel's voice perchance!):

- 37 Risponder: 'Quanto fia lunga la festa
di Paradiso, tanto il nostro amore
si raggerà dintorno cotal vesta.
- 40 La sua chiarezza seguita l'ardore,
l'ardor la visione, e quella è tanta,
quanta ha di grazia sopra il suo valore.
- 43 Come la carne gloriosa e santa
fia rivestita la nostra persona
più grata fia per esser tutta quanta.
- 46 Per che s' accrescerà ciò che ne dona
di gratuito lume il Sommo Bene;
lume ch' a lui veder ne condiziona:
- 49 Onde la vision crescer conviene,
crescer l'ardor che di quella s' accende,
crescer lo raggio che da esso viene.
- 52 Ma sì come carbon che fiamma rende,
e per vivo candor quella soperchia
sì, che la sua parvenza si difende,
- 55 Così questo fulgor, che già ne cerchia,
fia vinto in apparenza dalla carne
che tutto di la terra ricoperchia;
- 58 Nè potrà tanta luce affaticarne,
chè gli organi del corpo saran forti
a tutto ciò che potrà dilettarne.'
- 61 Tanto mi parver subiti ed accorti
e l' uno e l' altro coro a dicer: 'Amme,'
che ben mostrar disio dei corpi morti;
- 64 Forse non pur per lor, ma per le mamme,
per li padri, e per gli altri che fur cari
anzi che fosser sempiterne fiamme.
- 67 Ed ecco intorno di chiarezza pari
nascere un lustro sopra quel che v' era,
per guisa d' orizzonte che rischiari.
- 70 E sì come al salir di prima sera
comincian per lo ciel nuove parvenze,
sì che la vista pare e non par vera;
- 73 Parvemi lì novelle sussistenze
cominciar a vedere, e fare un giro
di fuor dall' altre due circonferenze.

- 37 'Long as the festival of Paradise
shall have continuance, so long our love
engarments us with such a radiant guise.
- 40 Its brightness will keep pace with movement of
our zeal, and zeal with vision, which is full
as it has grace its proper worth above.
- 43 When with the glorious holy flesh the soul
shall be re clothed, our personality
will dearer grow, since wholly beautiful.
- 46 Thereby will wax the light, that largess free
vouchsafed us by Supremest Excellence,
light which enables us His Face to see;
- 49 Wherefore the vision needs must wax intense,
the fervour wax that from the vision came,
and wax the radiance proceeding thence.
- 52 But even as a firebrand, daring flame,
is by its living glow victorious
so that its visible form remains the same,
- 55 So will this lustre now enswathing us
be vanquished by the flesh, that now from sight
this many a day by earth is covered thus.
- 58 Nor can we weary of so great a light;
strong shall the bodily organs be concerning
all that may minister to our delight.'
- 61 So ready and with such an eager burning
to cry 'Amen' appeared to me both quires,
as for the mortal body showed their yearning,
- 64 Not for themselves alone, but for their sires
and mothers and perchance for others dear
ere they became imperishable fires.
- 67 And lo! a lustre all around, of sheer
surpassing splendour dawned upon the view,
like an horizon that is growing clear.
- 70 And even as at early nightfall, new
gleamings begin to spot the sky again,
while true appears the vision, yet not true,
- 73 Methought up there, beginning to grow plain,
novel existences, a circling host
outside of those circumferences twain.

- 76 O vero isfavillar del santo spiro,
come si fece subito e candente
agli occhi miei che vinti non soffriro!
- 79 Ma Beatrice sì bella e ridente
mi si mostrò, che tra quelle vedute
si vuol lasciar che non seguir la mente.
- 82 Quindi ripreser gli occhi miei virtute
a rilevarsi, e vidimi translato
sol con mia Donna in più alta salute.
- 85 Ben m' accors' io ch' io era più levato,
per l' affocato riso della stella,
che mi pareva più roggio che l' usato.
- 88 Con tutto il core, e con quella favella
ch' è una in tutti, a Dio feci olocausto,
qual conveniasi alla grazia novella;
- 91 E non er' anco del mio petto esausto
l' ardor del sacrificio, ch' io conobbi
esso litare stato accetto e fausto;
- 94 Chè con tanto lucore e tanto robbi
m' apparvero splendor dentro a due raggi
ch' io dissi: 'O Elios che sì gli addobbi!'
- 97 Come distinta da minori e maggi
lumi biancheggia tra i poli del mondo
Galassia sì, che fa dubbiar ben saggi,
- 100 Sì costellati facean nel profondo
Marte quei rai il venerabil segno,
che fan giunture di quadranti in tondo.
- 103 Qui vince la memoria mia lo ingegno;
chè quella croce lampeggiava CRISTO,
sì ch' io non so trovare esemplo degno.
- 106 Ma chi prende sua croce e segue CRISTO,
ancor mi scuserà di quel ch' io lasso,
vedendo in quell' albor balenar CRISTO.
- 109 Di corno in corno, e tra la cima e il basso,
si movean lumi, scintillando forte
nel congiungersi insieme e nel trapasso.
- 112 Così si veggion qui diritte e torte,
veloci e tarde, rinnovando vista,
le minuzie dei corpi lunghe e corte

- 76 O very sparkling of the Holy Ghost,
 smiting mine eyes with such an instant flare
 they might not brook it, in the lustre lost!
- 79 But Beatrice showed so smiling and so fair,
 it must be left with visions that elude
 the memory, which cannot follow there.
- 82 Therefrom mine eyes, resuming aptitude
 to lift their lids, showed me with her alone
 lifted to loftier beatitude.
- 85 That I was lifted to a higher zone
 was told me by that star's enkindled smile
 which ruddily beyond the common shone.
- 88 In that deep language of the heart whose style
 is one in all, to God I here addressed
 oblation for the gift bestowed the while;
- 91 Nor yet was consummated in my breast
 the sacrifice, before I knew the prayer
 to be propitious and with favour blest,
- 94 For with a rubeate glory past compare
 showed splendours forth, within two rays of light,
 such that I cried: 'O Sun that makes them fair!'
- 97 As, 'twixt the two poles of the world, gleams white
 the Galaxy with less and greater stars,
 putting in doubt the very erudite,
- 100 Thus, constellated in the depth of Mars,
 fashioned those rays the venerated sign
 formed in a round by crossing quadrant bars.
- 103 Here conquers memory all wit of mine:
 because that Cross was lamping so with Christ
 I cannot find similitude condign;
- 106 But whoso takes his cross and follows Christ
 shall yet forgive me what I leave unsaid,
 seeing that dawnlight flashing with the Christ.
- 109 From arm to arm, and between base and head,
 lights were in motion, brightly scintillant,
 passing and counterchanging as they sped.
- 112 So swift and slow and level and aslant
 are seen here, ever altering their mien,
 the atomies of bodies long or scant

- 115 Moversi per lo raggio, onde si lista
tal volta l'ombra, che per sua difesa
la gente con ingegno ed arte acquista.
- 118 E come giga ed arpa, in tempra tesa
di molte corde, fa dolce tintinno
a tal da cui la nota non è intesa,
- 121 Così dai lumi che lì m'apparinno
s'accogliea per la croce una melode,
che mi rapiva senza intender l'inno.
- 124 Ben m'accors'io ch'ell'era d'alte lode,
perocchè a me venia: 'Risurgi e vinci,'
com' a colui che non intende ed ode.
- 127 Io m'innamorava tanto quinci,
che infino a lì non fu alcuna cosa
che mi legasse con sì dolci vinci.
- 130 Forse la mia parola par tropp'osa,
posponendo il piacer degli occhi belli,
ne' quai mirando mio disio ha posa.
- 133 Ma chi s'avvede che i vivi suggelli
d'ogni bellezza più fanno più suso,
e ch'io non m'era lì rivolto a quelli,
- 136 Escusar puommi di quel ch'io m'accuso
per escusarmi, e vedermi dir vero:
chè il piacer santo non è qui dischiuso,
- 139 Perchè si fa, montando, più sincero.

- 115 Adance upon the ray that cleaves the screen
of shadow often, which for their defending
men cause by handicraft to intervene.
- 118 And, as the harp or violin, with blending
of many chords, sweet tinkling makes to him
who hears the music without comprehending,
- 121 So from the lights there shining bright or dim
gathered along the Cross a melody
that raptured me, oblivious of the hymn.
- 124 High laud it was,—so much was clear to me,
because ‘Arise and conquer’ was the strain
which still I heard uncomprehendingly.
- 127 So charmed was I therewith that until then
naught had there ever been that could impose
on me the fetters of so sweet a chain.
- 130 Perchance too bold appear such words as those,
disparaging the charm of those fair eyes
gazing wherein my longing has repose.
- 133 But whoso comprehends how as they rise
those living seals of every beauty augment,
nor had I turned to where their lustre lies,
- 136 May excuse me from the indictment I present
for my excuse, and find my truth the surer:
the holy bliss has here no banishment
- 139 Because, ascending, it becomes the purer.

NOTES

ll. 1-87. The voice of Thomas had come from the rim; that of Beatrice flows back from the centre.

l. 18. Torraca insists that 'visible' is here used in the sense of 'capable of seeing', to which Grandgent adds the explanation 'with bodily eyes'. But does that interpretation harmonize with the context? These 'sightless substances' (as Shakespeare might have called them) are made manifest to bodily eye of the Poet only by the brilliant light that flows out of them. This and the voice are the 'accidents' of their 'substance'. The subconscious question that Beatrice perceives lurking in Dante's mind relates to the mystery of the assumption of the glorified body after the resurrection: how can bodily vision subsist unimpaired in the midst of such vivid splendour? It is a doubt attesting childlike faith. Whatever the reader's attitude toward such faith, it need not deprive him of the imaginative flexibility and reverence requisite to the enjoyment of the glorious burst of poetry to which the question leads. It may be well to note here that, with the exception of the shadowy faces in the Heaven of the Moon and perhaps of those in Mercury which come swimming like fish in pellucid water, Dante sees no bodily figures in Heaven until after his eyelids have drunk of the River of Light (Canto xxx, l. 88). Thereafter bodies are made visible to him such as all the blest are at last to receive. The glorified body may be conceived as the visible symbol of the eternalized human individual.

ll. 28-30. The chiasitic structure, symbolic of the Cross, pregnantly expresses the great mysteries of the triune God and the double nature of Christ.

ll. 34 ff. The light that speaks so modestly, in tones perhaps like those of the Seraph in making to Mary the tender annunciation, is that of the royal sage, Solomon. Cf. *Purgatorio* x. 34 ff. and *Paradiso* x. 109 ff.

ll. 61-6. In their supreme glory, so unimaginable that all this imagery of splendour is felt to come short, they still yearn for those features that stamp and identify the individual, linking him, amid the flux of things, to the humble and toilsome past, and this not so much for themselves as for those whom they loved:

'So mayst thou watch me where I weep,
As, unto vaster motions bound,
The circuits of thine orbit round
A higher height, a deeper deep.'

l. 67. Here begins the transition into the higher sphere of Mars: at first the vision appears uncertain as when the straining eye catches and loses and catches again the first faint glimmering stars in the fading daylight. Then comes the sudden unmistakable sparkling from which his dazzled eyes take refuge in the unspeakable love radiated from the smile of Beatrice.

l. 79. The smile of Beatrice always marks the rise into a higher sphere.

l. 86. The ruddy Heaven of Mars.

ll. 97 ff. Imagine the 'Milky Way' in the form of a cross.

l. 104. For the rime, cf. Canto xii, *ll.* 71, 73, 75.

ll. 112-17. The image of the Galaxy forming a cross is of sublime still splendour; the image of the motes dancing in the isolated sunbeam shot through a darkened chamber simply adds the notion of movement, and prepares the mind for the return to the starry splendour after the music pauses at the beginning of the next Canto.

ll. 122 ff. Hymn of the Warrior-Saints.

l. 130. Because the eyes of Beatrice reflect the divine (cf. *Purgatorio* xxxi, the closing strain).

ll. 136-7. In plain prose, as translated by Norton: 'May excuse me for that whereof I accuse myself in order to excuse myself, and may see that I speak truth'. In *ll.* 79-81 is described the smile of Beatrice at the moment of leaving the sphere of the sun. But in this new world the vision of the starry cross and the rapture of the heavenly hymn transcend in charm any previous experience; and not yet since arriving here has he turned to look into her eyes. The two lines of verbal legerdemain are certainly in strong contrast with the noble simplicity which rules this great Canto—they even set it off! Many commentators will have it that 'the living seals of every beauty' are the spheres, apparently failing to perceive that what the Poet is celebrating is the supreme loveliness of Beatrice; and what gives the quickening seal to beauty, if not the eye?

CANTO DECIMOQUINTO

- 1 Benigna volontade, in cui si liqua
sempre l'amor che drittamente spira,
come cupidità fa nell'iniqua,
4 Silenzio pose a quella dolce lira,
e fece quietar le sante corde,
che la destra del cielo allenta e tira.
7 Come saranno ai giusti preghi sorde
quelle sustanzie, che per darmi voglia
ch'io le pregassi, a tacer fur concorde?
10 Ben è che senza termine si doglia
chi per amor di cosa che non duri
eternalmente quell'amor si spoglia.
13 Quale per li seren tranquilli e puri
discorre ad ora ad or subito foco,
movendo gli occhi che stavan sicuri,
16 E pare stella che tramuti loco,
se non che dalla parte ond'ei s'accende
nulla sen perde, ed esso dura poco;
19 Tale, dal corno che in destro si stende,
al piè di quella croce corse un astro
della costellazion che lì risplende;
22 Nè si partì la gemma dal suo nastro,
ma per la lista radial trascorse,
che parve foco retro ad alabastro.
25 Sì pia l'ombra d'Anchise si porse,
se fede merta nostra maggior Musa,
quando in Elisio del figlio s'accorse.
28 *O sanguis meus, o superinfusa
gratia Dei! sicut tibi, cui
bis unquam coeli ianua reclusa?*
31 Così quel lume; ond'io m'attesi a lui.
Poscia rivolsi alla mia Donna il viso,
e quinci e quindi stupefatto fui;
34 Chè dentro agli occhi suoi ardeva un riso
tal, ch'io pensai co' miei toccar lo fondo
della mia grazia e del mio Paradiso.

CANTO XV

Cacciaguida recalls the Heroic Age of Florence

- 1 Benignant will, distilling into blest
love-breathing charities that never cease,
as greed in wicked will is manifest,
4 Silence imposed on that sweet lyre, and peace
upon those holy chords, which one by one
the hand of Heaven doth tighten and release.
7 How can be deaf to righteous orison
those Beings who, to open wide the door
for my petition, paused in unison?
10 'Tis right he should eternally deplore
who, out of love for what does not abide,
forfeits that other love for evermore.
13 As through the pure and tranquil eventide
a flash is seen from time to time to race,
setting the calmest eyelids staring wide,
16 Appearing like a star that changes place,
save that, where first enkindled is its light
nothing is missed, and it goes out apace,—
19 So shot from the arm extending to the right
to bottom of the cross, a star of them
that make the constellation there so bright;
22 Downward it ran along the radiant stem
like fire in alabaster shining through,
nor from the fillet once broke forth the gem.
25 Such love the shade of old Anchises drew,
if credit we our poet passing great,
when in Elysium his son he knew.
28 'O kinsman mine! Grace incommensurate
upon thee shed! to whom, as unto thee,
was ever opened twice the Heavenly gate?'
31 So spake that light; whence thereto eagerly
I turned,—then to my Lady,—in such wise
that from both quarters awe came over me;
34 For such a smile was glowing in her eyes
that, with mine own, methought I touched the bound
both of my grace and of my Paradise.

- 37 Indi ad udire ed a veder giocondo,
giunse lo spirto al suo principio cose
ch'io non intesi, sì parlò profondo:
- 40 Nè per elezion mi si nascose,
ma per necessità, chè il suo concetto
al segno dei mortal si soprappose.
- 43 E quando l'arco dell'ardente affetto
fu sì sfocato che il parlar discese
inver lo segno del nostro intelletto;
- 46 La prima cosa che per me s'intese,
'Benedetto sie tu,' fu, 'Trino ed Uno,
che nel mio seme sei tanto cortese.'
- 49 E seguitò: 'Grato e lontan digiuno,
tratto leggendo nel magno volume
u' non si muta mai bianco nè bruno,
- 52 Soluto hai, figlio, dentro a questo lume
in ch'io ti parlo, mercè di colei
ch'all'alto volo ti vestì le piume.
- 55 Tu credi che a me tuo pensier mei
da quel ch'è primo, così come raia
dall'un, se si conosce, il cinque e il sei.
- 58 E però chi io mi sia, e perch'io paia
più gaudioso a te, non mi domandi,
che alcun altro in questa turba gaia.
- 61 Tu credi il vero; chè minori e grandi
di questa vita miran nello specchio,
in che, prima che pensi, il pensier pandi.
- 64 Ma perchè il sacro amore, in che io veglio
con perpetua vista, e che m'assetta
di dolce disiar, s'adempia meglio,
- 67 La voce tua sicura, balda e lieta
suoni la volontà, suoni il disio,
a che la mia risposta è già decreta.'
- 70 Io mi volsi a Beatrice, e quella udio
pria ch'io parlassi, ed arrisemi un cenno
che fece crescer l'ali al voler mio.
- 73 Poi cominciai così: 'L'affetto e il senno,
come la prima Equalità v'apparse,
d'un peso per ciascun di voi si fenno;

- 37 Thereafter, blithe of look and blithe of sound,
that soul to salutation added speech
past my conception, it was so profound;
40 Of choice concealed he not what he would teach,
but force perforce, because the lofty sense
so overshot the mark of mortal reach.
43 But when the bow of burning love less tense
became, and his discourse came down and stood
upon the plane of our intelligence,
46 The first expression that I understood
was: 'Benediction on Thee, Trine and One,
for guerdoning my kinsman with such good!'
49 'A grateful and long fast,' he followed on,
'from reading the Great Book where black on white
is set down ineffaceably; my son,
52 Hast thou now satisfied within this light
I hail thee from, thanks to her favour who
clad thee with plumage for the lofty flight.
55 Thou deemest that thy thought to me flows through
from the First Cause, even as from unity,
if that be known, the five and six to you,
58 Not asking who I am, nor why in me
appears a gratulation more elate
than elsewhere in this jocund company.
61 Thou deemest true: in this life small and great
are gazing in that Mirror whence, before
thou thinkest, thy reflections emanate.
64 But that the Holy Love mine eyes adore
in vigil never broken, hunger-spent
with sweet desire, may be fulfilled the more,
67 O let thy voice, secure, glad, confident,
for will and yearning find the fitting word
whereto is predetermined my consent.'
70 Thereon I turned to Beatrice, who heard
before I spake and gave assent, whereby
the growing wings of my desire were stirred.
73 'When dawned on you the Prime Equality,
love and intelligence for each of you
became of equal poise,'—so answered I;

- 76 Perocchè il Sol, che v' allumò ed arse
col caldo e con la luce, è sì iguali,
che tutte simiglianze sono scarse.
- 79 Ma voglia ed argomento nei mortali,
per la cagion ch' a voi è manifesta,
diversamente son pennuti in ali.
- 82 Ond' io che son mortal, mi sento in questa
disagguaglianza, e però non ringrazio,
se non col core, alla paterna festa.
- 85 Ben supplico io a te, vivo topazio,
che questa gioia preziosa ingemmi,
perchè mi facci del tuo nome sazio.'
- 88 'O fronda mia, in che io compiaccemmi
pure aspettando, io fui la tua radice:'
cotal principio, rispondendo, femmi.
- 91 Poscia mi disse: 'Quel da cui si dice
tua cognazion, e che cent' anni e piùe
girato ha il monte in la prima cornice,
- 94 Mio figlio fu, e tuo bisavo fue:
ben si convien che la lunga fatica
tu gli raccorci con l' opere tue.
- 97 Fiorenza dentro dalla cerchia antica
ond' ella toglie ancora e terza e nona,
si stava in pace, sobria e pudica.
- 100 Non avea catenella, non corona,
non gonne contigiate, non cintura
che fosse a veder più che la persona.
- 103 Non faceva nascendo ancor paura
la figlia al padre, chè il tempo e la dote
non fuggían quinci e quindi la misura.
- 106 Non avea case di famiglia vote;
non v' era giunto ancor Sardanapalo
a mostrar ciò che in camera si puote.
- 109 Non era vinto ancora Montemalo
dal vostro Uccellatoio, che, com' è vinto
nel montar su, così sarà nel calo.
- 112 Bellincion Berti vid' io andar cinto
di cuoio e d' osso, e venir dallo specchio
la donna sua senza il viso dipinto;

- 76 'Because the Sun that lit and warmed you through
holds in its heat and light such balance fit
that all comparison falls short of true.
- 79 But mortal wing of will and wing of wit,
for reason well apparent to your sight,
fail of the balanced pinions requisite.
- 82 Whence I, who with the heart alone requite
thy dear paternal welcome, feel my lame
mortal disparity of will and might.
- 85 I do entreat thee, living topaz-flame,
set as a gem upon this jewel choice,
to satisfy my craving with thy name.'
- 88 'O leaf of mine, who made me even rejoice
expecting thee, thy root behold in me!
beginning thus, replied to me the voice;
- 91 Then said: 'That soul who gave thy family
the surname, and has round the Mountain gone
on the first terrace, a long century,
- 94 Was thy great-grandfather, and was my son:
befits that respite thou for him bespeak
from his long travail, with thy orison.
- 97 Florence, encircled by her wall antique,
whence tierce and nones are tolling evermore,
lived peaceable and temperate and meek.
- 100 Her arm no clasp, no crown her forehead bore,
no silken petticoat, with girdle gay
more tempting to the eye than she who wore.
- 103 Not yet did little daughter's birth dismay
the father; not too early did they mate,
nor yet was dowry ruinous to pay.
- 106 No house was then of children desolate;
not yet Sardanapalus came to show
what in a chamber he can perpetrate.
- 109 Not yet outflown was Monte Mario
by your Uccellatoio,—which as outflown
in soaring up, shall be in falling low.
- 112 I saw in belt of skin and clasp of bone
Bellincion Berti, and his lady quit
the mirror with complexion still her own;

- 115 E vidi quel de' Nerli e quel del Vecchio
esser contenti alla pelle scoperta,
e le sue donne al fuso ed al penneccchio.
- 118 O fortunate! Ciascuna era certa
della sua sepoltura, ed ancor nulla
era per Francia nel letto deserta.
- 121 L'una vegghiava a studio della culla,
e consolando usava l'idioma
che prima i padri e le madri trastulla;
- 124 L'altra, traendo alla rocca la chioma,
favoleggiava con la sua famiglia
de' Troiani, di Fiesole, e di Roma.
- 127 Saria tenuta allor tal meraviglia
una Cianghella, un Lapo Salterello,
qual or saria Cincinnato e Corniglia.
- 130 A così riposato, a così bello
viver di cittadini, a così fida
cittadinanza, a così dolce ostello,
- 133 Maria mi die', chiamata in alte grida,
e nell' antico vostro Batisteo
insieme fui cristiano e Cacciaguida.
- 136 Moronto fu mio frate ed Eliseo;
mia donna venne a me di val di Pado,
e quindi il soprannome tuo si feo.
- 139 Poi seguitai lo imperador Corrado,
ed ei mi cinse della sua milizia,
tanto per bene oprar gli venni in grado.
- 142 Dietro gli andai incontro alla nequizia
di quella legge, il cui popolo usurpa,
per colpa dei pastor, vostra giustizia.
- 145 Quivi fu' io da quella gente turpa
disviluppato dal mondo fallace,
il cui amor molte anime deturpa,
- 148 E venni dal martiro a questa pace.'

- 115 I saw the Nerli and the Vecchio fit
the leathern jerkin with good countenance,
with spindle and with flax their ladies sit.
- 118 O happy women! each yet in advance
sure of her burial, and none beguiled
of comfort in her bed because of France.
- 121 One, keeping watch above her cradled child,
would soothe it with the babbling idiom
whereto the fathers and the mothers smiled;
- 124 And one, the thread from distaff drawing home,
gathered her 'brood and prattled fables how
came Trojans to Fiesolë and Rome.
- 127 A marvel then Gianghella's brazen brow,
or Lapo Salterello, as complete
as Cincinnatus and Cornelia now.
- 130 To life of citizen in house and street
so fair and quiet, to so great a fame
for neighbour loyalty, to home so sweet,
- 133 My mother gave me, calling Mary's name;
and so, within your ancient Baptistry,
Christian and Cacciaguida I became.
- 136 Moronto and Eliseo brothered me;
my Lady came from Valley of the Po,
whence was thy surname handed down to thee.
- 139 I followed Kaiser Conrad then, with so
good service that he belted me a knight,
so much my prowess made his favour grow.
- 142 Beneath his banner followed I to fight
that ill-famed law whose folk usurp control,
to pastors' shame, of what is yours by right.
- 145 There disentangled by those caitiffs foul
was I from the delusive world, whose quest
infatuate debases many a soul,
- 148 And came from martyrdom unto this rest.'

NOTES

ll. 1-12. We learned in *Purgatorio* xviii, in the course of that philosophic conversation during the second night on the Mountain, that we are left perfectly free to direct our love either to the fashion of this world, which passeth away, or to the things that are abiding. It is the corner-stone of ethics. Those heavenly substances here give him example of benignant love by silencing the rapturous chords that had entranced him. Overwhelmed by the thought that this was done to facilitate his will to pray to them, the Poet exclaims that he well deserves his fate who, for love of perishable goods, robs himself of a love so considerate of our weakness:

‘And is there care in Heaven? And is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base,
That may compassion of their evils move?’

ll. 13 ff. The light of Dante’s greatest ancestor slips down the shaft of the mystic cross like a ‘shooting star’.

ll. 28-30. Cacciaguida begins speaking in Latin, then the universal tongue of Church, law, diplomacy, education. The greeting *sanguis meus* (kinsman mine) is taken from the *Aeneid*, vi. 835, where it is addressed to Julius Caesar by the ancestor of the Julian gens. Cf. also the meeting of Aeneas and Anchises, *Aeneid*, vi. 679 ff. Obviously, the question implies no exclusion of the case of St. Paul. Cf. *Inferno* ii. 13-33.

l. 34. Here is the Poet’s vindication from the indictment brought against himself at the close of the last Canto.

ll. 50 ff. The Great Book in which he reads, the Mirror in which they gaze, are images of the Divine Mind.

ll. 73-82. The Divine Being is called the Prime Equality because having wisdom, power and love in equipoise. The blest are so imbued with His light (intelligence) and heat (love) that to do is as easy as to know what ’twere good to do; thought and action are convertible. Dante here humbly urges his moral inadequacy to the form of action called for—that is, discourse with a being in whom performance duly follows on desire. Shakespeare has often given classic expression to our human disparity of will and deed.

‘The flighty purpose never is o’ertook
Unless the deed go with it.’

ll. 91-6. So Dante comes honestly by that besetting sin of pride to which he confessed in the conversation with Sapia

(*Purgatorio* xiii. 133-8). He did not meet his great-grandfather on that weary first cornice of the Mountain where pride is purged away. To have introduced his ancestor there would have rendered the present passage less artistically effective.

ll. 109-10. Hills from which travellers from the north got the first view, respectively, of Rome and of Florence.

ll. 112-17. Great citizens in their day (cf. *Inferno* xvi. 37, and next Canto).

l. 120. Before Dante's time members of the great guilds were trafficking farther afield than France: in Bruges, London, Constantinople. The merchant or traveller who ventured so far seldom returned in the same year, if ever.

ll. 127-8. A woman of doubtful reputation, and a man whom Dante detested.

ll. 133 ff. Tireless research has disclosed little more of Dante's ancestry than can be inferred from these lines. For the invocation of Mary in childbirth, cf. *Purgatorio* xx. 19-24.

ll. 142 ff. Second Crusade, preached by St. Bernard (1147); heroic death in such a cause was accounted martyrdom.

CANTO DECIMOSESTO

- 1 O poca nostra nobiltà di sangue!
Se gloriar di te la gente fai
quaggiù, dove l' affetto nostro langue,
4 Mirabil cosa non mi sarà mai;
chè là, dove appetito non si torce,
dico nel cielo, io me ne gloriai.
7 Ben sei tu manto che tosto raccorce,
sì che, se non s' appon di dìe in dìe,
lo tempo va dintorno con le force.
10 Dal *Voi*, che prima Roma sofferie,
in che la sua famiglia men persevera,
ricominciaron le parole mie.
13 Onde Beatrice, ch' era un poco scevra,
ridendo, parve quella che tossio
al primo fallo scritto di Ginevra.
16 Io cominciai: 'Voi siete il padre mio,
voi mi date a parlar tutta baldezza,
voi mi levate sì ch' io son più ch' io.
19 Per tanti rivi s' empie d' allegrezza
la mente mia, che di sè fa letizia,
perchè può sostener che non si spezza.
22 Ditemi dunque, cara mia primizia,
quai fur li vostri antichi, e quai fur gli anni
che si segnaro in vostra puerizia.
25 Ditemi dell'ovil di San Giovanni
quanto era allora, e chi eran le genti
tra esso degne di più alti scanni.'
28 Come s' avviva allo spirar dei venti
carbone in fiamma, così vidi quella
luce risplendere a' miei blandimenti:
31 E come agli occhi miei si fe' più bella,
così con voce più dolce e soave,
ma non con questa moderna favella,
34 Disse mi: 'Da quel dì che fu detto AVE,
al parto in che mia madre, ch' è or santa,
s' alleviò di me ond' era grave,

CANTO XVI

Concerning forty worthy families of Florence

- 1 O petty our nobility of blood!
if thou prompt men to make their boast of thee
down here, where faints our yearning for the good,
- 4 Never shall this seem wonderful to me,
for where desire is not perverted, yea
in Heaven itself, I felt such vanity.
- 7 In truth, thy cloak so quickly shrinks away,
that, add we not a frequent piece thereto,
time with the shears goes round it day by day.
- 10 With *You*, which Rome at first permitted, *You*,
wherein her children now least persevere,
proudly began I my discourse anew.
- 13 Whence Beatrice, a little distant here,
by smiling called to mind that dame who coughed
at first recorded fault of Guenevere.
- 16 'You are my Father,' so began I soft,
'you fill me for discourse with courage high,
you lift me far above myself aloft.
- 19 So many rivulets are pouring joy
into my heart that happy is my tongue
seeing I can bear and not be rent thereby.
- 22 Tell then, beloved root whence I am sprung,
who were your forebears, what the years foregone
that signalized themselves when you were young.
- 25 Tell me about the sheepfold of Saint John,
what were the numbers and who were the folk
within it who the highest places won?'
- 28 As is by breathing of the wind awoke
flame in a coal, so did I see that blaze
kindle at the caressing words I spoke,
- 31 And growing ever fairer to my gaze,
with sweeter accent gentlier it said,
but in no dialect of nowadays:
- 34 'From the first *Ave* to that childing-bed
whereon my mother, now ensainted, through
delivering of me was comforted,

- 37 Al suo Leon cinquecento cinquanta
e trenta fiate venne questo foco
a rinfiammarsi sotto la sua pianta.
- 40 Gli antichi miei ed io nacqui nel loco
dove si trova pria l'ultimo sesto
da quel che corre il vostro annual gioco.
- 43 Basti de' miei maggiori udirne questo;
chi ei si furo, ed onde venner quivi,
più è tacer che ragionare onesto.
- 46 Tutti color ch' a quel tempo eran ivi
da poter arme tra Marte e il Batista,
erano il quinto di quei che son vivi.
- 49 Ma la cittadinanza, ch' è or mista
di Campi, di Certaldo e di Figghine,
pura vedeasi nell' ultimo artista.
- 52 O quanto fora meglio esser vicine
quelle genti ch' io dico, ed al Galluzzo
ed a Trespiano aver vostro confine,
- 55 Che averle dentro, e sostener lo puzzo
del villan d' Aguglion, di quel da Signa,
che già per barattar ha l' occhio aguzzo!
- 58 Se la gente ch' al mondo più traligna,
non fosse stata a Cesare noverca,
ma come madre a suo figliuol, benigna,
- 61 Tal fatto è Fiorentino, e cambia e merca,
che si sarebbe volto a Simifonti,
là dove andava l' avolo alla cerca.
- 64 Sariansi Montemurlo ancor dei Conti;
sariansi i Cerchi nel pivier d' Acone,
e forse in Valdigueve i Buondelmonti.
- 67 Sempre la confusion delle persone
principio fu del mal della cittade,
come del corpo il cibo che s' appone.
- 70 E cieco toro più avaccio cade
che 'l cieco agnello, e molte volte taglia
più e meglio una che le cinque spade.
- 73 Se tu riguardi Luni ed Urbisaglia
come son ite, e come se ne vanno
dietro ad esse Chiusi e Sinigaglia:

- 37 Five hundred times and fifty and thirty drew
this circling fire to its own Lion apace,
beneath his paw to kindle up anew.
- 40 My sires and I were native to that place
where the last ward first intersects the course
of the hot runner in your annual race.
- 43 Enough about my elders this perforce:
for as to whence they came and who they were,
silence is more becoming than discourse.
- 46 All those at that time competent to bear
weapons, the Baptistry and Mars between,
numbered a fifth of them now living there.
- 49 But the community, where intervene
Campi, Certaldo, and Figlinë now,
pure to the humblest artisan was seen.
- 52 O how much better let such neighbours plough
around Galluzzo, and let your border lie
at Trespiano, rather than allow
- 55 Their entrance, so to be offended by
the stench of Aguglion, and Signa's clown,
who has for jobbery so sharp an eye.
- 58 Were folk who most on earth have fallen down
not stepmother to Caesar, but instead
benignant, like true mother to her son,
- 61 One, made a Florentine by truck and trade,
would have turned back to Semifontë again,
where went about his grandsire begging bread.
- 64 Still would the Counts on Montemurlo reign,
the Cerchi be in Aconë's parish still,
perchance the Buondelmonte on Greve's plain.
- 67 When mingled populations overfill
the city, evermore begins its woe,
as added victual makes the body ill.
- 70 And the blind bullock falls more headlong low
than the blind lamb, and more one sword will cleave,
and often deeper than the five will go.
- 73 If Luni and Urbisaglia thou perceive,
how they have gone, and likewise pass away
Chiusi and Senigallia, to believe

- 76 Udir come le schiatte si disfanno,
non ti parrà nuova cosa nè forte,
poscia che le cittadi termine hanno.
- 79 Le vostre cose tutte hanno lor morte
sì come voi; ma celasi in alcuna
che dura molto, e le vite son corte.
- 82 E come il volger del ciel della luna
copre e discopre i liti senza posa,
così fa di Fiorenza la fortuna;
- 85 Perchè non dee parer mirabil cosa
ciò ch' io dirò degli alti Fiorentini,
onde la fama nel tempo è nascosa.
- 88 Io vidi gli Ughi, e vidi i Catellini,
Filippi, Greci, Ormanni ed Alberichi,
già nel calare, illustri cittadini;
- 91 E vidi così grandi come antichi,
con quel della Sannella, quel dell' Arca,
e Soldanieri, ed Ardinghi, e Bostichi.
- 94 Sopra la porta, che al presente è carica
di nuova fellonia di tanto peso
che tosto fia jattura della barca,
- 97 Erano i Ravignani, ond' è disceso
il conte Guido, e qualunque del nome
dell' alto Bellincion ha poscia preso.
- 100 Quel della Pressa sapeva già come
regger si vuole, ed avea Galigaio
dorata in casa sua già l' elsa e il pome.
- 103 Grande era già la colonna del vaio,
Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifanti e Barucci,
e Galli, e quei che arrossan per lo staio.
- 106 Lo ceppo di che nacquero i Calfucci
era già grande, e già erano tratti
alle curule Sizii ed Arrigucci.
- 109 O quali io vidi quei che son disfatti
per lor superbia! e le palle dell' oro
fiorian Fiorenza in tutti suoi gran fatti.
- 112 Così facean li padri di coloro
che, sempre che la vostra chiesa vaca,
si fanno grassi stando a consistoro

- 76 That in like fashion families decay
will seem opinion neither strange nor new,
seeing that even cities have their day.
- 79 All your affairs are mortal, even as you,
the very brevity of life concealing
in some the creeping steps of death from view;
- 82 And as the lunar heaven, for ever wheeling,
covers and bares incessantly the shore,
so fickle Fortune is with Florence dealing.
- 85 Hence what I tell should seem no fable-lore
concerning the renownèd Florentines
whose fame through lapse of time is known no more.
- 88 I saw the Hugos, saw the Catellines,
Filippi, Greci, Ormanni, Alberichi there,
illustrious citizens in their declines,
- 91 And saw, as mighty as they ancient were,
with one of La Sannella, of Arca one,
Ardinghi and Bostichi and Soldanier.
- 94 Above the gateway newly weighed upon
by felony so heavy in its shame
that from the bark shall soon be jettison,
- 97 Dwelt then the Ravignani, from whom came
Count Guido down, and whoso to this hour
has taken lofty Bellincionë's name.
- 100 He of La Pressa wisely wielded power
already, and the Galigaio claimed
sword-hilt and pummel gilt in hall and bower.
- 103 Greatly the pale of Minever was famed,
Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifanti, and Barucci,
and Galli,—and others by the bushel shamed.
- 106 The parent stock whence budded the Calfucci
was great already, and to curule chair
already drawn Sizii and Arrigucci.
- 109 Ah, mighty did I see them who despair
because of their own pride! and the Balls of Gold
in all her prowess made our Florence fair.
- 112 So likewise did the ancestors of old
of those who, when your see is vacant, find
fat profit by abiding in the fold.

- 115 L'oltracotata schiatta, che s'indraca
retro a chi fugge, ed a chi mostra il dente,
o ver la borsa, com' agnel si placa,
118 Già venia su, ma di picciola gente,
sì che non piacque ad Ubertin Donato
che poi il suocero il fe' lor parente.
121 Già era il Caponsacco nel mercato
disceso giù da Fiesole, e già era
buon cittadino Giuda ed Infangato.
124 Io dirò cosa incredibile e vera:
nel picciol cerchio s'entrava per porta,
che si nomava da quei della Pera.
127 Ciascun che della bella insegna porta
del gran barone, il cui nome e il cui pregio
la festa di Tommaso riconforta,
130 Da esso ebbe milizia e privilegio;
avvenga che col popol si raduni
oggi colui che la fascia col fregio.
133 Già eran Gualterotti ed Importuni;
ed ancor saria Borgo più quieto,
se di nuovi vicin fosser digiuni.
136 La casa di che nacque il vostro fletto,
per lo giusto disdegno che v' ha morti,
e pose fine al vostro viver lieto,
139 Era onorata ed essa e suoi consorti.
O Buondelmonte, quanto mal fuggisti
le nozze sue per gli altrui conforti!
142 Molti sarebbon lieti che son tristi,
se Dio t' avesse concesso ad Ema
la prima volta che a città venisti.
145 Ma conveniasi a quella pietra scema
che guarda il ponte, che Fiorenza fesse
vittima nella sua pace postrema.
148 Con queste genti, e con altre con esse,
vid' io Fiorenza in sì fatto riposo,
che non avea cagion onde piangesse.
151 Con queste genti vid' io glorioso
e giusto il popol suo tanto, che il giglio
non era ad asta mai posto a ritroso,
154 Nè per division fatto vermiglio.'

- 115 That haughty breed, so dragon-fierce behind
the fugitive, but let your teeth be seen
or purse belike, seem lambs, they grow so kind,
118 Was on the rise, although from people mean,—
whence Ubertin Donato felt disgrace
when his wife's father made them kith and kin.
121 Down from Fiesolè to market-place
had gone now Caponsacco,—Judah there
and Infangato, burghers in good grace.
124 Incredible, yet true, what I declare:
the little circuit had an entrance way
called after them whose emblem is the Pear.
127 All wearers of the fair insignia
of the great Peer, whose name and valour grim
the feast of Thomas calls to mind to-day,
130 Knighthood received and privilege from him;
though with the populace to-day unite
that man who guards the scutcheon with a rim.
133 Gualterotti and Importuni were at height;
and had they for new neighbours suffered dearth
more tranquil would the Borgo be to-night.
136 The house from which your tears have had their birth,
because its just resentment killed your joyance
and with the blood of many stained the earth,
139 Was honoured in itself and its alliance:
O Buondelmonte, by what evil daring
didst flee at others' prompting its affiance!
142 Glad would be many who are now despairing,
if God had to the Ema relegated
thyself, when first toward the city faring.
145 But meet it was that Florence consecrated
a victim, while her last peace was prevailing,
to that bridge-warding marble mutilated.
148 With folk like these, nor yet were others failing,
did I see Florence in such deep repose
that she had no occasion yet for wailing;
151 I saw her people glorious with those,
and just, so that the Lily never stood
reversed upon the lances of her foes,
154 Nor dyed vermilion yet by party feud.'

NOTES

ll. 10 ff. Dante addresses his ancestor as if he were royal ('you' instead of 'thou'). This use of the plural pronoun to a single person was then erroneously supposed to have been introduced in servile respect to Julius Caesar. But even at this day the people of Rome 'least persevere' in this usage. The smile of Beatrice at our Poet's besetting sin of pride, reminds him of the warning cough of the lady-in-waiting when Guenevere first betrayed her passion for Lancelot. For the *you*, *your*, instead of *thou* (*thy*), cf. *Purgatorio* xxxi. 36; xxxiii. 92. Several other instances will be recalled by the reader of these notes.

l. 25. Modern Florence is the city of the Baptist, as the ancient was the city of Mars.

l. 37. $580 \times 687 +$ (the number of our days required for the revolution of the planet Mars) gives about 1091 as the birth-year of Cacciaguida.

ll. 46-8. The city lay between the Church of St. John and the Ponte Vecchio with the mutilated statue of Mars. Populations were small in those days. Villani says that in 1300 Florence had 'more than 30,000 citizens capable of bearing arms'. London, in Shakespeare's time, three centuries later, had perhaps as many. If, however, we counted only those 'on fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be filed', the census to-day might seem less congested.

ll. 49 ff. Dante was as far as possible from being a 'booster' of a 'greater Florence'. He was so medieval as not to confuse greatness with bigness; nor did the movement from the farm to the city seem to him a wholesome social symptom. The reader will not look to this place for a local gazetteer. Longfellow fills thirteen pages with interesting notes to this Canto; it would be easy to fill a hundred. Dante's contemporary, the historian Villani, confirms and illustrates many of the Poet's allusions.

ll. 58 ff. That is to say, if the clergy had kept hands off. The Papal Curia had promoted the Guelf league against the Empire. Semifontè, a fief of the Empire, had been so effectually destroyed that its very name has perished from the countryside (a strange, unusual occurrence!). The destruction of the feudal strongholds, leaving the peasantry unprotected, caused a rush to the city.

ll. 88 ff. For biographical information and anecdote Toynbee's *Dictionary* is the obvious repertory. The reader will find profit in looking up Bellincion Berti and his daughter, the good Gualdrada (*Inferno* xvi. 37). The historical student soon per-

ceives that the viewpoint in these Cantos is very much that of an old Tory. The new families, like the Cerchi, were often useful citizens. And the institution of the guilds is nowhere here referred to, although economically, politically, socially, even intellectually, of primary importance and immeasurable influence.

ll. 97-9. The Counts Guidi (cf. l. 64) descended through the good Gualdrada from Bellincionë (or Bellincion) Berti, of the ancient Ravignani family.

l. 105. The great family who 'blush for the bushel' has been already alluded to but not named. *Purgatorio* xii. 105.

ll. 112-14. Two great families owed their wealth to the reversionary right to the episcopal revenues between the death of a bishop and the appointment of a successor.

ll. 115-17. The Adimari, one of whom had possession of Dante's property after his exile, here get a stab where they would feel it most.

ll. 124-126. The marvel is that even a minor gate to the old city should have been named for a family so obscure as the della Pera, from whom had arisen the opulent new house of the Peruzzi, hardly second to the Bardi among the bankers and merchants of that age. The veracious chronicler, Giovanni Villani, qualifies his statement with a 'some say', perhaps hesitating to remind these *nouveaux riches* of their humble origin. Dante certainly had no such hesitation. Had he lived a little longer he might have seen in the decline of the fortune of the Peruzzi a striking instance in harmony with the tenor of this canto. The repudiation by English Edward III, in 1339, of his enormous debt to the Bardi and the Peruzzi brought about the fall of their great houses, which had branches in all the financial centres of Europe and the Levant. This was according to Davidsohn, the most serious financial crash of the Middle Ages.

ll. 127-32. Hugh of Brandenburg, Imperial Vicar about the year 1000, ennobled certain families, from one of which came Giano della Bella, the stalwart tribune of the people, whose scutcheon was that of the great baron with the addition of a border of gold.

ll. 136 ff. The Amidei, whose murder of young Buondelmonte for slighting their alliance is the traditional origin of the factions of Guelf and Ghibelline.

ll. 152 ff. The old banner showed a white lily in a red field; the Guelfs reversed the colours. This Canto may remind the reader of Homer's catalogue of ships. Probably nowhere in any literature has so much history and tradition and sentiment and satire been packed into so little room.

CANTO DECIMOSETTIMO

- 1 Qual venne a Climenè, per accertarsi
di ciò ch'avea incontro a sè udito,
quei ch'ancor fa li padri a' figli scarsi;
- 4 Tale era io, e tale era sentito
e da Beatrice, e dalla santa lampa
che pria per me avea mutato sito.
- 7 Per che mia donna: 'Manda fuor la vampa
del tuo disio,' mi disse, 'sì ch'ella esca
segnata bene della interna stampa;
- 10 Non perchè nostra conoscenza cresca
per tuo parlare, ma perchè t'ausi
a dir la sete, sì che l'uom ti mesca.'
- 13 'O cara piota mia, che sì t'insusi
che, come veggion le terrene menti
non capere in triangolo due ottusi,
- 16 Così vedi le cose contingenti
anzi che sieno in sè, mirando il punto
a cui tutti li tempi son presenti;
- 19 Mentre ch'io era a Virgilio congiunto
su per lo monte che l'anime cura,
e discendendo nel mondo defunto,
- 22 Dette mi fur di mia vita futura
parole gravi; avvenga ch'io mi senta
ben tetragono ai colpi di ventura.
- 25 Per che la voglia mia saria contenta
d'intender qual fortuna mi s'appressa;
chè saetta previsa vien più lenta.'
- 28 Così diss'io a quella luce stessa
che pria m'avea parlato, e come volle
Beatrice, fu la mia voglia confessa.
- 31 Nè per ambage, in che la gente folle
già s'inviscava, pria che fosse anciso
l'Agnel di Dio che le peccata tolle,
- 34 Ma per chiare parole, e con preciso
Latin, rispose quell'amor paterno,
chiuso e parvente del suo proprio riso:

CANTO XVII

Dante's Exile and Justification

- 1 As who makes fathers chary of undue
 promise to children, questioned Clymenë
 if what he heard against himself was true,
4 Even such was I, and such perceived to be
 by Beatrice and by the Holy Lamp
 who previously had changed his place for me.
7 Then said my Lady to me: 'Do not damp
 the flame of thy desire, but let it soar
 well making manifest the inward stamp;
10 Not that thy words may make our knowledge more,
 but that thou mayst acquire the habitude
 to tell thy thirst that we for thee may pour.'
13 'Dear parent stock, raised to such altitude
 that, as to earthly minds is evident
 no triangle may two obtuse include,
16 Thus do contingent things before the event
 exist for thee, still gazing where take head
 all times together with the present blent;
19 While in the company of Virgil led
 up and along the spirit-healing slope
 and down throughout the region of the dead,
22 I heard discourses grievous in their scope
 touching the remnant of my life, although
 well squared against the blows of chance by hope:
25 Wherefore my will were well content to know
 what fortune is approaching to molest:
 for bolt foreshadowed strikes a lighter blow.'
28 So to that selfsame light that had addressed
 beforehand me, I said as willed to say
 by Beatrice, and mine own will confessed.
31 Not with blind riddles which in former day
 ensnared the credulous, ere yet was slain
 the Lamb of God who takes our sins away,
34 But with clear utterance and language plain
 that fatherly affection made reply,
 in his own smile withdrawn and shown again:

- 37 'La contingenza, che fuor del quaderno
della vostra materia non si stende,
tutta è dipinta nel cospetto eterno.
- 40 Necessità però quindi non prende,
se non come dal viso in che si specchia
nave che per corrente giù discende.
- 43 Da indi, sì come viene ad orecchia
dolce armonia da organo, mi viene
a vista il tempo che ti s'apparecchia.
- 46 Qual si partì Ippolito d'Atene
per la spietata e perfida noverca,
tal di Fiorenza partir ti conviene.
- 49 Questo si vuole, questo già si cerca,
e tosto verrà fatto, a chi ciò pensa
là dove Cristo tutto dì si merca.
- 52 La colpa seguirà la parte offensa
in grido, come suol; ma la vendetta
fia testimonio al ver che la dispensa.
- 55 Tu lascerai ogni cosa diletta
più caramente, e questo è quello strale
che l'arco dello esilio pria saetta.
- 58 Tu proverai sì come sa di sale
lo pane altrui, e com'è duro calle
lo scendere e il salir per l'altrui scale.
- 61 E quel che più ti graverà le spalle
sarà la compagnia malvagia e scempia
con la qual tu cadrai in questa valle,
- 64 Che tutta ingrata, tutta matta ed empia
si farà contro a te; ma poco appresso
ella, non tu, n'avrà rossa la tempia.
- 67 Di sua bestialitate il suo processo
farà la prova, sì che a te fia bello
averti fatta parte per te stesso.
- 70 Lo primo tuo rifugio e il primo ostello
sarà la cortesia del gran Lombardo,
che in sulla Scala porta il santo uccello,
- 73 Che in te avrà sì benigno riguardo
che del fare e del chieder, tra voi due,
fia prima quel che tra gli altri è più tardo.

- 37 'Contingency, which is embounded by
the volume of your matter, is beheld
all pictured forth before the Eternal Eye,
40 Yet not thence of necessity compelled,
more than the vessel down the current steering
is by the mirror in the eye propelled.
43 Therefrom comes, even as comes upon the hearing
sweet organ music, to my sight the course
of time already now for thee preparing.
46 As through stepmother proof to all remorse
Hippolytus from Athens fled of old,
so out of Florence shalt thou go perforce.
49 Already this is willed and sought,—nay hold
it good as done by him who schemes the plot
where every day the Christ is bought and sold.
52 The wonted cry of blame will follow hot
the party wronged; but vengeance yet will bring
witness to Truth that shall the wage allot.
55 Thou shalt leave far behind thee everything
most dearly loved: the sharpest barb is there
that first the bow of banishment lets fling.
58 Thereby shalt thou make proof what bitter fare
is bread of others, and how hard a road
the going up and down another's stair.
61 Yet for thy shoulders the most crushing load
will be companions witless and malign
with whom thou hast to fall to such abode,
64 Who, graceless and ungrateful, will combine
all furious against thee; but their own
foreheads will soon be red for it, not thine.
67 Of their stupidity will proof be shown
in what they do, till thou shalt find it best
to have made a party by thyself alone.
70 Thy first asylum and first house of rest
shall be the mighty Lombard's courtesy
who on the Ladder bears the Eagle blest,
73 Who will have so benignant heed for thee
that of the doing and asking 'twixt you two
first will be what is wonted last to be.

- 76 Con lui vedrai colui che impresso fue
nascendo sì da questa stella forte,
che notabili fien l'opere sue.
- 79 Non se ne son le genti ancora accorte
per la novella età; chè pur nove anni
son queste rote intorno di lui torte.
- 82 Ma pria che il Guasco l'alto Arrigo inganni,
parran faville della sua virtute
in non curar d'argento nè d'affanni.
- 85 Le sue magnificenze conosciute
saranno ancora sì, che i suoi nimici
non ne potran tener le lingue mute.
- 88 A lui t'aspetta ed ai suoi benefici;
per lui fia trasmutata molta gente,
cambiando condizion ricchi e mendici.
- 91 E porteraine scritto nella mente
di lui, ma nol dirai: e disse cose
incredibili a quei che fien presente.
- 94 Poi giunse: 'Figlio, queste son le chiose
di quel che ti fu detto; ecco le insidie
che dietro a pochi giri son nascose.
- 97 Non vo' però ch' a' tuoi vicini invidie,
poscia che s'infutura la tua vita
vie più là che il punir di lor perfidie.'
- 100 Poi che tacendo si mostrò spedita
l'anima santa di metter la trama
in quella tela ch'io le porsi ordita,
- 103 Io cominciai, come colui che brama,
dubitando, consiglio da persona
che vede, e vuol dirittamente, ed ama:
- 106 'Ben veggio, padre mio, sì come sprona
lo tempo verso me, per colpo darmi
tal ch'è più grave a chi più s'abbandona;
- 109 Per che di provedenza è buon ch'io m'armi,
sì che se loco m'è tolto più caro,
io non perdessi gli altri per miei carmi.
- 112 Giù per lo mondo senza fine amaro,
e per lo monte, del cui bel cacume
gli occhi della mia Donna mi levarò,

- 76 Beside him shalt thou see that hero who
from this strong star received at birth such seal
that his emprise will be renowned therethrough.
- 79 His tender age does not as yet reveal
him to the people: only while are told
nine childish years, these circles round him wheel;
- 82 But ere the Gascon pontiff have cajoled
the lofty Henry, sparks of worth shall shoot,
showing him careless both of toil and gold.
- 85 Fame of his glorious deeds so absolute
shall grow, that foes shall not prove dominant
enough to keep the tongues of people mute.
- 88 On him and on his favours do thou plant
thy trust; through him shall many change degree,
altering state, both rich and mendicant.
- 91 And bear thou written in thy memory
of him, but tell it not,—and he revealed
things past believing, even of those who see.
- 94 Then added: 'Son, these glosses may be sealed
to what was told thee; snares are waiting thus
behind few circles of the spheres concealed.
- 97 Yet be not of thy neighbours envious,
seeing thy future life will long outlast
the forfeit of their deeds perfidious.'
- 100 Soon as that holy soul to silence passed,
showing the pattern it had woven above
the web whereof myself the warp had cast,
- 103 Did I begin like one misdoubting of
his course, who craves advice from one of those
that, seeing, do correctly will, and love:
- 106 'Well see I, Father, how my time of woes
to deal me such a buffet spurs along
as is the heavier when one heedless goes;
- 109 Whence it is good with foresight to be strong,
that, though the dearest place bereft me be,
I forfeit not the others by my song.
- 112 Down through the world embittered endlessly,
and up the Mountain from whose lovely height
my Lady with her eyes uplifted me,

- 115 E poscia per lo ciel di lume in lume,
ho io appreso quel che, s'io ridico,
a molti fia sapor di forte agrume;
118 E s'io al vero son timido amico,
temo di perder viver tra coloro
che questo tempo chiameranno antico.'
- 121 La luce in che rideva il mio tesoro
ch'io trovai là, si fe' prima corrusca,
quale a raggio di sole specchio d'oro;
124 Indi rispose: 'Coscienza fusca
o della propria o dell'altrui vergogna,
pur sentirà la tua parola brusca.
- 127 Ma nondimen, rimossa ogni menzogna,
tutta tua vision fa manifesta,
e lascia pur grattar dov'è la rogna;
130 Chè se la voce tua sarà molesta
nel primo gusto, vital nutrimento
lascerà poi quando sarà digesta.
- 133 Questo tuo grido farà come vento,
che le più alte cime più percote;
e ciò non fa d'onor poco argomento.
- 136 Però ti son mostrate in queste rote,
nel monte, e nella valle dolorosa,
pur l'anime che son di fama note;
139 Chè l'animo di quel ch'ode non posa,
nè ferma fede per esemplo ch'haia
la sua radice incognita e nascosa,
- 142 Nè per altro argomento che non paia.'

- 115 And then throughout these heavens from light to light,
have I learnt what, retold by me, would reek
with savour rank to many an appetite;
- 118 And if to Truth I prove a friend too meek,
I fear the forfeiture of life with those
who after us shall call this time antique.'
- 121 That light, which by its smiling did disclose
my treasure-trove, then flashed out, coruscating
as in the sun a golden mirror glows.
- 124 'A conscience clouded, whether contemplating
its own shame or another's,' he replied,
'will feel thy language veritably grating.
- 127 But none the less, put every lie aside,
and make thy vision clearly manifested,
letting them scratch who have an itching hide;
- 130 For, though thy word be grievous, barely tasted,
it will at length become a vital food
nutritious, so it be but well digested.
- 133 This cry of thine will be like tempest rude
which buffets most the highest summits, so
making approof of worthy fortitude.
- 136 Whence on the Mountain, in the Vale of woe,
and in these wheeling Circles are revealed
only the souls whom by renown we know;
- 139 Because the mind of him who hears is steeled
to incredulity of argument
rooted in cases covert and concealed,
- 142 Nor yields to proof that is not evident.'

NOTES

ll. 1-27. It is the unfortunate result of Apollo's indulgence of Phaethon that is supposed to make fathers chary to children. Phaethon, proud of divine origin, having heard that the god was not in fact his father, put the question to his mother, Clymenë. Similarly Dante, having heard heavy tidings about himself from Farinata (*Inferno* x), Ser Brunetto (*Inferno* xv), Vanni Fucci (*Inferno* xxiv), Conrad Malaspina (*Purgatorio* viii), Oderisi (*Purgatorio* xi), now questions his great forebear who can see in God things contingent: those that, while future to us, are all present in eternity. There the future is as certain as the plainest mathematical proposition.

ll. 37 ff. A stock argument of the Christian schoolmen. While the events of Dante's life are foreseen, his will is left free.

‘If I foreknew,
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.’

Paradise Lost, III. 117.

ll. 46-54. As the innocent Hippolytus was driven out of Athens by the false witness of a perfidious accuser, even so must Dante depart from Florence; indeed the plot is already schemed at Rome (apparently in April, 1300, before the priorate of Dante) and will soon be carried out by him who presides over the exchange where every day Christ is bought and sold (Boniface VIII, cf. the whole of *Inferno* xix). The vengeance may be indeterminate or it may refer to the outrage at Anagni (*Purgatorio* xx. 85 ff.).

ll. 61-9. We know only that Dante after his exile at the beginning of 1302 was a man of light and leading among the *fiorusciti* (outs), that their attempts to gain access to Florence by force were vain, and that he separated himself from the Whites. As to details reports are somewhat conflicting and conjectures more so.

ll. 70 ff. The *gran Lombardo*, to whose courtesy the exiled Poet first turned for refuge, is an elder brother of the famous Can Grande della Scala, who is separately referred to and eulogized. The word Scala (ladder) made the ladder their obvious punning device, and as imperial vicars they placed the eagle above the ladder on their crest. Dante was received at Verona by the Scaligers (ladder-bearers) during the minority of Can Grande, who succeeded to the lordship in 1312, at the age of twenty-one. The deception by the Gascon Pope Clement

V of Henry VII was at the time of that Emperor's coming to Italy in 1311. After the death of Henry in 1313, Dante hoped in Can Grande as a regenerator of Italy. He is probably the Hound of *Inferno* i. 101 ff. The best illustration of these lines is found in Rossetti's noble poem, 'Dante in Verona'.

ll. 101-2. Images from the textile industries, on which the prosperity of Florence was based, are not very common. Cf. Canto iii, ll. 95-6; *Purgatorio* xxxi. 96; *Inferno* xvii. 16-18.

ll. 106 ff. 'Whosoever in writing a modern history shall follow Truth too near the heels, it may haply strike out his teeth.' Dante understands this at least as well as Sir Walter Raleigh. But Dante feels still more the truth stated by Emerson with Dantean brevity: 'He who writes for himself writes to an eternal audience.' His boldness in affixing the brand to the powerful of his time is hardly equalled in the history of poetry or prophecy. And though the instances he gives are far from being for us modern ones, yet the withers of men now living are not unwrung where he strikes the probe.

l. 129. Dante's forebear, speaking with the forthright plainness of a simpler age, seems to teach by example that in moral diagnosis all squeamishness is out of place. To resent the occasional 'low' images of a lofty poet would be as foolish as to resent the studied harshness of phrasing that sometimes varies symphonic harmony. Cf. Canto xvi, l. 33.

l. 136 to end. Our Poet's fine dramatic instinct leads him to bring in all his personages in an apparently casual manner; here, however, he declares a distinct purpose in their selection. Some commentators endeavour to draw a distinction between those who are shown to him by Virgil or Beatrice and those others who are merely recognized by himself; but most of both these classes exemplify the melancholy reflections on the vanity of fame set down in *Purgatorio* xi, ll. 91-117. For example, how shadowy has grown the figure of that Folco (Folquet or Fulk) of Marseilles whose immortality is so confidently predicted (*Paradiso* ix, l. 40)! If Sordello is somewhat better remembered it is not because he was on earth distinguished, 'col nome che più dura e più onora' (*Purgatorio* xxi. 85); Folco was a poet too. It was Dante who set Browning on the track of Sordello, and it is to Dante that all but a few of the historical personages of the Poem owe the rescue of their names from oblivion. The eulogy of Can Grande della Scala, to whom the *Paradiso* was dedicated, is embedded in the very middle of this central Canto. This is thought to be a deliberate feature in the architecture of the Poem.

CANTO DECIMOTTAVO

- 1 Già si godeva solo del suo verbo
quello specchio beato, ed io gustava
lo mio, temprando col dolce l'acerbo;
4 E quella Donna ch' a Dio mi menava,
disse: 'Muta pensier, pensa ch' io sono
presso a colui ch' ogni torto disgrava.'
7 Io mi rivolsi all' amoroso suono
del mio conforto, e quale io allor vidi
negli occhi santi amor, qui l' abbandono;
10 Non perch' io pur del mio parlar diffidi,
ma per la mente che non può reddire
sopra sè tanto, s' altri non la guidi.
13 Tanto poss' io di quel punto ridire,
che, rimirando lei, lo mio affetto
libero fu da ogni altro disire.
16 Fin che il piacere eterno, che diretto
raggiava in Beatrice, dal bel viso
mi contentava col secondo aspetto,
19 Vincendo me col lume d' un sorriso,
ella mi disse: 'Volgiti ed ascolta,
che non pur ne' miei occhi è Paradiso.'
22 Come si vede qui alcuna volta
l' affetto nella vista, s' ello è tanto
che da lui sia tutta l' anima tolta,
25 Così nel fiammeggiar del fulgor santo,
a ch' io mi volsi, conobbi la voglia
in lui di ragionarmi ancora alquanto.
28 Ei cominciò: 'In questa quinta soglia
dell' arbore che vive della cima,
e frutta sempre, e mai non perde foglia,
31 Spiriti son beati, che giù, prima
che venissero al ciel, fur di gran voce,
sì ch' ogni Musa ne sarebbe opima.
34 Però mira nei corni della croce;
quel ch' io or numerò, lì farà l' atto
che fa in nube il suo foco veloce.'

CANTO XVIII

The Mystic Symbol of Justice in the Temperate Star of Jove

- 1 Now in his inward thought with joy replete
was that blest Mirror, and I savoured mine
by seasoning the bitter with the sweet;
4 And the Lady leading me to the Divine
said: 'Shift thy thought to see my link unbroken
with him who lightens every load malign.'
7 Thereat I turned to look at the fond token
of my Consoler, and what love I viewed
in the holy eyes is here perforce unspoken,
10 Partly that words would be misunderstood,
partly that memory is unreturning
if others guide not to such altitude.
13 This only can I tell that point concerning,
that, rebeholding her, my own affection
grew fetterless and free from other yearning.
16 While the Eternal Joy without deflection
rayed upon Beatrice, and mirror-wise
from her fair look appeased me by reflection,
19 Subduing me with light of smiling eyes,
'Turn round and hearken,' thus to me she said,
'not in mine eyes alone is Paradise!'
22 As sometimes in the visage here is read
the inclination, if of so much force
that the whole soul thereby is riveted,
25 So turning to my great progenitor's
sanctified radiance, the wish I found
yet somewhat further with me to discourse.
28 Then he began to speak: 'In this fifth round
branching the Tree that draws life from the crest
and fruits for aye, and never sheds a frond,
31 Are souls who, ere they came among the blest,
were in the world below of so great fame
could noble Muse no richer theme request.
34 Observe the arms o' the Cross, and those I name
will at the signal in such mode proceed
as in the cloud its fulminating flame.'

- 37 Io vidi per la croce un lume tratto
dal nomar Josuè, com' ei si feo,
nè mi fu noto il dir prima che il fatto.
- 40 Ed al nome dell' alto Maccabeo
vidi moversi un altro roteando,
e letizia era ferza del paleo.
- 43 Così per Carlo magno e per Orlando
due ne seguì lo mio attento sguardo,
com' occhio segue suo falcon volando.
- 46 Poscia trasse Guglielmo, e Rinoardo,
e il duca Gottifredi la mia vista
per quella croce, e Roberto Guiscardo.
- 49 Indi tra l' altre luci mota e mista,
mostrommi l' alma che m' avea parlato,
qual era tra i cantor del cielo artista.
- 52 Io mi rivolsi dal mio destro lato
per vedere in Beatrice il mio dovere,
o per parlare o per atto segnato,
- 55 E vidi le sue luci tanto mere,
tanto gioconde, che la sua sembianza
vinceva gli altri e l' ultimo solere.
- 58 E come per sentir più diletanza
bene operando l' uom di giorno in giorno
s' accorge che la sua virtute avanza;
- 61 Sì m' accors' io che il mio girare intorno
col cielo insieme avea cresciuto l' arco,
veggendo quel miracol più adorno.
- 64 E quale è il trasmutare in picciol varco
di tempo in bianca donna, quando il volto
suo si discarchi di vergogna il carico;
- 67 Tal fu negli occhi miei, quando fui volto,
per lo candor della temprata stella
sesta, che dentro a sè m' avea ricolto.
- 70 Io vidi in quella giovia facella
lo sfavillar dell' amor che lì era,
segnare agli occhi miei nostra favella.
- 73 E come augelli surti di riviera,
quasi congratulando a lor pasture,
fanno di sè or tonda or altra schiera,

- 37 I saw along the Cross a lustre speed
at name of Joshua: to ear and eye
the word did not anticipate the deed.
- 40 And at the name of Maccabaeus high
another spiral whirling flashed amain,
and that which whipped the top was holy joy.
- 43 Likewise for Roland and for Charlemagne
did my enraptured gaze two lights pursue,
as eye doth after flying falcon strain.
- 46 Afterward William drew, and Renouard drew,
and great Duke Godfrey drew mine eye by fire
along that Cross, and Robert Guiscard too.
- 49 Then mingling with the other lights, the Sire
whose spirit had discoursed with me made known
his artistry among the heavenly quire.
- 52 To my right hand I turned me at that tone,
my duty to behold in Beatrice
either by language or by gesture shown,
- 55 And all her past and recent wont by this
her present look was vanquished, such a ray
flashed from her eyes lit with exceeding bliss.
- 58 And as by greater comfort in essay
of righteous doing, man becomes aware
of virtue waxing in him day by day,
- 61 So, wheeling in a wider circle there,
a heaven of more extended scope I knew,
seeing that miracle become more fair.
- 64 For now a shift of colour met my view,
as when a woman's countenance, oppressed
with blushful shame, resumes its pallid hue,
- 67 Such, when I turned about was manifest
dawning in the white star of temperance,
the sixth that had received me to its breast.
- 70 I saw within that Jovial radiance
the flying sparks of love that there abound
shaping our language out before my glance.
- 73 As birds, rejoicing in their pasture ground,
start up together from a river dell
and gather in a flock, now long, now round,

- 76 Sì dentro ai lumi sante creature
volitando cantavano, e faciensi
or D, or I, or L, in sue figure.
- 79 Prima cantando a sua nota moviensi;
poi, diventando l'un di questi segni,
un poco s'arrestavano e taciensi.
- 82 O diva Pegasea, che gl'ingegni
fai gloriosi, e rendili longevi,
ed essi teco le cittadi e i regni,
- 85 Illustrami di te, sì ch'io rilevi
le lor figure com'io l'ho concette;
paia tua possa in questi versi brevi.
- 88 Mostrarsi dunque in cinque volte sette
vocali e consonanti; ed io notai
le parti sì come mi parver dette.
- 91 *Diligite iustitiam*, primai
fur verbo e nome di tutto il dipinto;
Qui iudicatis terram, fur sezzai.
- 94 Poscia nell'M del vocabol quinto
rimasero ordinate, sì che Giove
pareva argento lì d'oro distinto.
- 97 E vidi scendere altre luci dove
era il colmo dell'M, e lì quetarsi
cantando, credo, il ben ch'a sè le move.
- 100 Poi, come nel percoter dei ciocchi arsi
surgono innumerabili faville,
onde gli stolti sogliono augurarsi,
- 103 Risurger parver quindi più di mille
luci, e salir quali assai e quai poco,
sì come il Sol, che l'accende, sortille;
- 106 E quietata ciascuna in suo loco,
la testa e il collo d'un'aquila vidi
rappresentare a quel distinto foco.
- 109 Quei che dipinge lì non ha chi il guidi,
ma esso guida, e da lui si rammenta
quella virtù ch'è forma per li nidi.
- 112 L'altra beatitudo, che contenta
pareva prima d'ingigliarsi all'emme,
con poco moto seguìtò la impronta.

- 76 So holy creatures in the lights that dwell,
were flitting and were chanting, fashioning
their flock to figures,—D and I and L.
- 79 First sang they, to their own notes fluttering,
then, having fashioned one or the other sign,
would hold their peace awhile and stay their wing.
- 82 O Pegaseä, glorifier divine
of human wits, their life to render long,
as towns and kingdoms they, by aid of thine,
- 85 Brighten me with thyself to tell in song
their shapes as I deciphered them in Heaven,
in these brief verses let thy breath be strong!
- 88 These then displayed themselves in five times seven
vowels and consonants: I noted down
the members as they seemed by utterance given.
- 91 DILIGITE JUSTITIAM, first noun
and verb of all the figure were enscrolled,
QUI JUDICATIS TERRAM, followed on.
- 94 These in the M of the fifth word did hold
such settled order there, that Jupiter
seemed to be silver patterned out with gold.
- 97 And other lights I saw descending where
the apex of the M appeared their goal,
chanting, I think, the Good that draws them there.
- 100 Then, as by stirring of a burning coal
innumerable sparks are upward sped,
prophetic omens to the simple soul,
- 103 So thence thousands of lights seemed spirited
to mount aloft, some lower and some higher,
by their enkindling Sun distributed;
- 106 And lo! when settled into place each flier,
I saw an Eagle as to head and breast
delineated by that patterned fire.
- 109 He there who paints has none to guide, but best
guideth Himself, and from Him we divine
the secret of the moulding of the nest.
- 112 The other blessed flock, content to twine
a lily flower at first upon the M,
with a slight flutter filled out the design.

- 115 O dolce stella, quali e quante gemme
mi dimostraro che nostra giustizia
effetto sia del ciel che tu ingemme!
- 118 Per ch'io prego la Mente, in che s'inizia
tuo moto e tua virtute, che rimiri
ond' esce il fummo che il tuo raggio vizia;
- 121 Sì ch' un' altra fiata omai s' adiri
del comperare e vender dentro al templo,
che si murò di segni e di martiri.
- 124 O milizia del ciel, cu' io contemplo,
adora per color che sono in terra
tutti sviati dietro al malo esempio.
- 127 Già si solea con le spade far guerra;
ma or si fa togliendo or qui or quivi
lo pan che il pio padre a nessun serra.
- 130 Ma tu, che sol per cancellare scrivi,
pensa che Pietro e Paolo, che moriro
per la vigna che guasti, ancor son vivi.
- 133 Ben puoi tu dire: 'I' ho fermo il disiro
sì a colui che volle viver solo,
e che per salti fu tratto al martiro,
- 136 Ch' io non conosco il Pescator nè Polo.'

- 115 Sweet star, what jewels, and how many of them,
informed me that our Justice is the birth
of that sixth heaven whereof thou art the gem!
- 118 Wherefore I pray the Mind wherein thy worth
and motion start, that He take note whence come
the fumes that dim thy radiance on earth;
- 121 That he once more be wroth with all and some
who buy and sell within the Temple-door
built round with miracles and martyrdom.
- 124 O heavenly host on whom I gaze, implore
for them who still are here on earth, each one
misled by ill example! War of yore
- 127 Was waged by dint of sword, but now 'tis done
merely withholding, now here, and now there,
the bread the pitying Father grudges none.
- 130 But thou whose writ is only made to tear,
reflect that Peter and Paul are living yet,
who died for the vineyard thou art stripping bare.
- 133 Well mayst thou urge: 'I have my heart so set
on that ascetic who in royal hall
was danced into the martyr's coronet,
- 136 That I know not the fisherman nor Paul.'

NOTES

ll. 1-18. The soul of Dante's ancestor is called a blest mirror as being a reflection of the Divine Wisdom, while the eyes of Beatrice are a reflection of the Divine Love. Here we should recall the sublime allegory set forth in *Purgatorio* xxxi. 121-6. Looking into her eyes his troubled thought is to give place to the peace which passeth all understanding.

ll. 28-30. The heavenly spheres are compared, collectively, to a tree in every way contrasting with trees on earth, in that it 'lives from the top', that it bears fruit always, and does not shed its leaves. Cf. Revelation xxii. 2.

ll. 43-8. These personages, known to our Poet through semilegendary history, and as heroes of the romances of chivalry, were either defenders of the Christian world against the Saracen, or Crusaders. Robert Guiscard was more or less directly an ally of the greatest of the popes (Gregory VII) in his epochal conflict with the Empire.

l. 55. The smile of Beatrice marking ascent to the Heaven of Jupiter.

ll. 64 ff. The transition from the rubeate glory of Mars to the silvered tones of Jove is as soft and silent as the paling of the blush on a fair cheek.

ll. 82 ff. 'Diva Pegaseä', nymph of the spring which burst from the mountain of Helicon at touch of the hoof of the flying horse: hence, 'divine (or heavenly) Muse'. The precise identity of the Muse is left to the reader's fancy. Urania, who represents the knowledge of the heavens, would perhaps be the most inspiring of the 'sacrosancte vergini', whom the Poet invokes at his most need. Compare especially the noble invocation in *Purgatorio* xxix. 37-42.

ll. 91 ff. 'Love Justice, you that are judges of the earth': first words of the book Wisdom, for which see the Catholic Bible, or *Vulgate*.

ll. 97-129. One must picture to the mind the medieval capital M resembling the outline of the human face, as observed in *Purgatorio* xxiii. 33, where the M is also a rhyme-word. This with slight calligraphic variation becomes the *fleur de lis* of France (or the heraldic lily of Florence), from the medial summit of which buds forth the head of the Eagle. The M symbolizes the *Monarchia* whereof Dante discoursed and dreamed; the union of this with the lily and the crowning of the

whole with the emblem of Rome signifies the subordination of France to the Universal Empire—this not, of course, as an accomplished fact but as an ideal consummation. The Poet, with the freedom of prophecy, leaps forward from the period to which the vision is assigned, as indeed he is supposed to have done at the close of *Purgatorio* xxxii. The pope referred to here is probably not Boniface but John XXII, who from his seat at Avignon excommunicated Can Grande in 1317, withholding for political ends the sacramental bread which ‘the pitying Father grudges none’. The Florentine scholar, Parodi, points out that this interpretation explains the transition at the end to invective and irony. Here, and at the close of the next Canto, the Poet proceeds to vigorous practice of the precepts uttered by his great ancestor at the close of Canto xvii.

l. 130 to end. The florin, with the lily on one side and the image of the Baptist on the other, prompts this avaricious pope to neglect Peter and Paul. The allusion here is the same as that in *Inferno* xix. 112 ff. The pope is so devoted to the Baptist as to worship him in hundreds of his images. It is curious to note that in Canto ix, l. 130 the florin is referred to with the same sad irony, there designated by the figure stamped on the reverse as here by that on the obverse.

CANTO DECIMONONO

- 1 Parea dinanzi a me con l' ali aperte
la bella image, che nel dolce frui
liete facevan l' anime conserte.
- 4 Parea ciascuna rubinetto, in cui
raggio di sole ardesse sì acceso,
che ne' miei occhi rifrangesse lui.
- 7 E quel che mi convien ritrar testeso,
non portò voce mai, nè scrisse inchiostro,
nè fu per fantasia giammai compreso;
- 10 Ch' io vidi, ed anco udii parlar lo rostro,
e sonar nella voce ed 'Io' e 'Mio',
quand' era nel concetto 'Noi' e 'Nostro'.
- 13 E comincì: 'Per esser giusto e pio
son io qui esaltato a quella gloria,
che non si lascia vincere a disio;
- 16 Ed in terra lasciai la mia memoria
sì fatta, che le genti lì malvage
commendan lei, ma non seguon la storia.'
- 19 Così un sol calor di molte brage
si fa sentir, come di molti amori
usciva solo un suon di quella image.
- 22 Ond' io appresso: 'O perpetui fiori
dell' eterna letizia, che pur uno
parer mi fate tutti i vostri odori,
- 25 Solvetemi spirando il gran digiuno
che lungamente m' ha tenuto in fame,
non trovandogli in terra cibo alcuno.
- 28 Ben so io che, se in cielo altro reame
la divina giustizia fa suo specchio,
che 'l vostro non l' apprende con velame.
- 31 Sapete come attento io m' apparecchio
ad ascoltar; sapete quale è quello
dubbio, che m' è digiun cotanto vecchio.'
- 34 Quasi falcone ch' esce del cappello,
move la testa, e coll' ali si plaude,
voglia mostrando e facendosi bello,

CANTO XIX

The Symbolic Eagle discourses of Divine Justice

- 1 The image fashioned by the engarlanding
souls who in sweet fruition took delight,
stood fair before me, spreading either wing.
- 4 Each seemed a little ruby where a bright
sunbeam appeared so burningly to sink
as to flame back again upon my sight.
- 7 And what I now am bound to tell, by ink
was never traced, by ear was never heard,
nor entered into heart of man to think:
- 10 For lo! I heard and saw that beakèd Bird
give voice to I and MY, though understood
were WE and OUR as men conceive the word.
- 13 So it began: 'Through being just and good
raised am I to that glory far transcending
all mortal yearning for beatitude,
- 16 And left remembrance of my great intending
upon the earth, but wicked people there
follow the story not, although commending.'
- 19 As many an ember makes us feel the glare
of one sole heat, so rang one melody
from many loves out of that image fair:
- 22 Whereon I prayed: 'O flowers perpetually
blooming from joy eternal, breathing forth
your odours that one fragrance seems to me,
- 25 So breathing, banish from me the great dearth
which makes me for so long in hunger pine,
finding not any food for it on earth.
- 28 Well know I that, though Justice the divine
be in another Heavenly kingdom glassed,
no veil for you endarkens the design.
- 31 Ye know how eagerly do I forecast
the hearing, and ye know what is that doubt
which is within me such a long-drawn fast.'
- 34 As from the hood the falcon issuing out
conceals not her desire, but makes her fair,
lifting her head and fluttering about,

- 37 Vid' io farsi quel segno, che di laude
della divina grazia era contesto,
con canti, quai si sa chi lassù gaude.
- 40 Poi cominciò: 'Colui che volse il sesto
all'estremo del mondo, e dentro ad esso
distinse tanto occulto e manifesto,
- 43 Non potè suo valor sì fare impresso
in tutto l'universo, che il suo verbo
non rimanesse in infinito eccesso.
- 46 E ciò fa certo che il primo superbo,
che fu la somma d'ogni creatura,
per non aspettar lume, cadde acerbo:
- 49 E quinci appar ch'ogni minor natura
è corto recettacolo a quel bene
che non ha fine, e sè con sè misura.
- 52 Dunque nostra veduta, che conviene
essere alcun dei raggi della mente
di che tutte le cose son ripiene,
- 55 Non può da sua natura esser possente
tanto, che suo principio non discerna
molto di là da quel che l'è parvente.
- 58 Però nella giustizia sempiterna
la vista che riceve il vostro mondo,
com'occhio per lo mar, dentro s'interna;
- 61 Chè benchè dalla proda veggia il fondo,
in pelago nol vede, e nondimeno
è lì, ma cela lui l'esser profondo.
- 64 Lume non è, se non vien dal sereno
che non si turba mai, anzi è tenebra,
od ombra della carne, o suo veleno.
- 67 Assai t'è mo aperta la latebra,
che t'ascondeva la giustizia viva,
di che facei question cotanto crebra;
- 70 Chè tu dicevi: "Un uom nasce alla riva
dell'Indo, e quivi non è chi ragioni
di CRISTO, nè chi legga, nè chi scriva;
- 73 E tutti i suoi voleri ed atti buoni
sono, quanto ragione umana vede,
senza peccato in vita o in sermoni.

- 37 So in my sight became that emblem, where
praises of Grace Divine were interwound
with songs familiar to the happy there.
- 40 Then it began: 'Who turned the compass round
the world, and Who in its circumference
set much both clear to sight and too profound,
- 43 Could not in all the Universe condense
His Worth so far but that His Infinite
Wisdom remained in overplus immense.
- 46 In proof whereof, behold that first proud Wight
among all creatures supereminent,
falling unripe, through not awaiting light;
- 49 Therefore too scanty a recipient
appears each lesser nature for that Good
which has no bound but by self-measurement.
- 52 From this it follows that our sight, which should
out of that Mind supernal radiate
wherewith all things whatever are imbued,
- 55 Can by its nature have no power so great
but that its origin sees far afield
beyond the scope of all we contemplate.
- 58 Therefore no vision to your world revealed
can plumb eternal Justice to the ground,
just as the ocean to your eye is sealed;
- 61 Awhile from shore ye may the bottom sound,
and out of soundings in the unplumbed sea
we know it still is there, though never found.
- 64 Save from the never-clouded Source, may be
no light, but rather everywhere is shade,
venom and shadow of carnality.
- 67 Now amply is the covert open laid
that kept the living Justice from thy sight,
whereof thou hast so frequent question made.
- 70 'For,' saidest thou, 'on Indus-bank a wight
is brought to birth, where none is to direct
to Christ, nor who may read of Him, nor write,
- 73 And all his acts and wishes are correct
as far as human reason may perceive,
whether in word or life without defect;

- 76 More non battezzato e senza fede;
ov' è questa giustizia che il condanna?
ov' è la colpa sua, se ei non crede?"
- 79 Or tu chi sei, che vuoi sedere a scranna,
per giudicar da lungi mille miglia,
con la veduta corta d'una spanna?
- 82 Certo a colui che meco s' assottiglia,
se la scrittura sopra voi non fosse,
da dubitar sarebbe a maraviglia.
- 85 O terreni animali, o menti grosse!
la prima Volontà ch' è per sè buona,
da sè, ch' è Sommo Ben, mai non si mosse.
- 88 Cotanto è giusto, quanto a lei consuona;
nullo creato bene a sè la tira,
ma essa radiando lui cagiona.'
- 91 Quale sopr' esso il nido si rigira,
poi che ha pasciuti la cicogna i figli,
e come quei ch' è pasto la rimira;
- 94 Cotal si fece (e sì levai li cigli)
la benedetta imagine, che l' ali
movea sospinta da tanti consigli.
- 97 Roteando cantava, e dicea: 'Quali
son le mie note a te, che non le intendi,
tal è il giudizio eterno a voi mortali.'
- 100 Poi si quetarón quei lucenti incendi
dello Spirito Santo, ancor nel segno
che fe' i Romani al mondo reverendi,
- 103 Esso ricominciò: 'A questo regno
non salì mai chi non credette in CRISTO,
nè pria, nè poi ch' ei si chiavasse al legno.
- 106 Ma vedi, molti gridan CRISTO, CRISTO,
che saranno in giudizio assai men *prope*
a lui, che tal che non conosce CRISTO;
- 109 E tai Cristiani dannerà l' Etiope,
quando si partiranno i due collegi,
l' uno in eterno ricco, e l' altro inope.
- 112 Che potran dir li Persi ai vostri regi,
come vedranno quel volume aperto,
nel qual si scrivon tutti i suoi dispreghi?

- 76 Faithless he dies, nor baptism can receive:
what is this justice which condemns the man?
what is his fault if he do not believe?"
- 79 Now who art thou to mount the bench and scan,
a thousand miles from what thou wouldst discuss,
with thy short vision reaching but a span?
- 82 Surely for him who cavils with me thus,
were not the Scripture over you, the food
for subtle questioning were marvellous.
- 85 O earthly animals! O spirits rude!
never the Primal Will was self-betraying,
nor altered from Itself the Supreme Good.
- 88 Weighed is your human justice with Its weighing,
by no created goodness is It led,
rather from It created good is raying.'
- 91 As wheels the mother-stork just overhead
when she has given her nestlings all their fill,
and they look up toward her comforted,
- 94 So thither was my brow uplifted still,
and circling so the blessèd image flew
on wings propelled by force of many a will.
- 97 Wheeling it chanted, adding thereunto:
'My notes thou hearest heeding not their sense,
so mortals by Eternal Justice do.'
- 100 When quiet was that glowing effluence
of Holy Ghost, still in the heraldry
that gained the Romans world-wide reverence,
- 103 'Up to this Kingdom,' it resumed to me,
'rose never one who had not faith in Christ
before or since they nailed Him to the tree.
- 106 But many, mark, who cry aloud Christ! Christ!
shall be less near Him at the Great Assize,
by very far, than some who know not Christ.
- 109 The Ethiop shall such Christians stigmatize
when the two colleges apart are led,
one poor, the other with the eternal prize.
- 112 To Christian monarchs what will not be said
by Persians, when the Book is open placed
upon whose page their evil deeds are spread?

- 115 Lì si vedrà tra l'opere d'Alberto
quella che tosto moverà la penna,
per che il regno di Praga fia deserto.
- 118 Lì si vedrà il duol che sopra Senna
induce, falseggiando la moneta,
quei che morrà di colpo di cotenna.
- 121 Lì si vedrà la superbia ch'aseta,
che fa lo Scotto e l'Inghilese folle,
sì che non può soffrir dentro a sua meta.
- 124 Vedrassi la lussuria e il viver molle
di quel di Spagna, e di quel di Buemme,
che mai valor non conobbe, nè volle.
- 127 Vedrassi al Ciotto di Jerusalemme
segnata con un I la sua bontate,
quando il contrario segnerà un emme.
- 130 Vedrassi l'avarizia e la viltate
di quel che guarda l'isola del foco,
dove Anchise finì la lunga etate;
- 133 Ed a dare ad intender quanto è poco,
la sua scrittura fien lettere mozze,
che noteranno molto in parvo loco.
- 136 E parranno a ciascun l'opere sozze
del barba e del fratel, che tanto egregia
nazione, e due corone han fatte bozze.
- 139 E quel di Portogallo, e di Norvegia
lì si conosceranno, e quel di Rascia
che mal ha visto il conio di Vinegia.
- 142 O beata Ungaria, se non si lascia
più malmenare! E beata Navarra,
se s'armasse del monte che la fascia!
- 145 E creder dee ciascun che già, per arra
di questo, Nicosia e Famagosta
per la lor bestia si lamenti e garra,
- 148 Che dal fianco dell'altre non si scosta.'

- 115 There 'mid the deeds of Albert shall be traced
that which will start the moving pen once more
to show the realm of Prague become a waste;
118 There seen how men along the Seine deplore
the doing of that counterfeiter accurst
foredoomed to die by bristle of the boar;
121 There seen the arrogance that quickens thirst,
driving both Scot and Englishman insane,
whence both anon across the border burst;
124 There the soft life and lust of him of Spain
and the Bohemian,—never known to them
was prowess, or held ever in disdain.
127 There to the Cripple of Jerusalem
shall with an I the good be credited,
while the reverse is rated at an M.
130 There shall the greed and cowardice be read
of him who wards the fiery Island,—tomb
where the long journey of Anchises led;
133 And to denote him paltry, let the doom
in curt abbreviations be set down,
infinite matter in a little room.
136 And foul to all be noted the renown
of uncle and of brother, who deflower
illustrious lineage, and each a crown.
139 And he who holds in Portugal the power,
and Norway shall be shown; and Rascia there
who saw Venetian coin in evil hour.
142 O blest were Hungary, if she would bear
no buffets longer; and Navarre in bliss
if her own mountain but a rampart were!
145 And let each one recall, in proof of this,
how Nicosía and Famagusta groan
already for their beast, and take it amiss
148 That he beside the others hold his own.'

NOTES

The tremendous denunciation of several of the monarchs of the time is a signal instance of that buffeting of the summits for which the Poet is commended by his great ancestor in the concluding lines of Canto xvii. Only the supreme authority of the Empire can set right a world thus out of joint. This idea—a favourite one with Dante—is systematically developed in the De Monarchia. In the Second Book of that work, chapters II and VIII, is a formal statement of the theological doctrine of this canto.

ll. 1 ff. Only a cold and superficial glance can fail to catch the majestic beauty of this symbol of living justice based on love, speaking with the voice of many souls at one together, and exhaling the blended fragrance that lingers in human remembrance of noble achievement.

ll. 22-4.

‘Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.’

ll. 25-33. Dante prays that his great fast be broken, aware that the Eagle sees not as through a glass darkly, although the hierarchy called ‘Thrones’ are the special mirrors of Divine thought (cf. Canto ix, l. 61).

l. 34. The image of the falcon, delighted at the removal of the hood, was most effective at a time when hawking was universally the fashionable sport.

l. 40. The image of the compasses may be suggested by Proverbs viii. 27. Milton expands the image (*Paradise Lost*, vii. 224 ff.).

ll. 46-51. If the most perfect of created beings was unable to apprehend the Infinite Good, how scant a container of it is poor human nature! This, granting the premisses, is most cogent.

ll. 52-7. The reading of these lines varies, as does the interpretation. The simplest and most natural rendering is that here followed. Passerini explains the word ‘principio’ in line 56 (meaning beginning, source, origin) as follows: ‘The source of your sight (or vision) . . . is God, whose mind discerns far beyond that which is manifest to the perception of mortals.’ Others make the word ‘origin’ the object of the verb. Thus Norton translates: ‘Therefore our vision . . . cannot in its own nature be so potent as not to discern its origin far beyond that which is apparent to it.’ That is, the divine source of our vision lies beyond the scope of our vision.

ll. 70-8. The problem: How can the virtuous heathen be condemned? In the following Canto Dante will open a very wide way for their salvation. The baptism here referred to is merely that of John, not that of the spirit.

l. 90. The argument culminating here should be compared with that of St. Paul in Romans ix. It is perhaps introduced as a basis for what follows. Effective vindication of Divine Justice is found in the assurance that baptized potentates, whose deeds differ in no respect from those of pagan kings, are held to strict account.

ll. 101-2. The heraldic sign of the Eagle. Cf. the beginning of Canto vi.

ll. 103 ff. The stormy voice again strikes the highest peaks (note the rime on the sacred name).

l. 120. Philip the Fair, thrown from his horse, which had been crazed by the bristly wild boar darting between his legs.

l. 127. Charles II of Naples, to whose crown is attached the title of Jerusalem. The moving pen of the Recorder will leave his account badly unbalanced.

ll. 130 ff. Frederick, King of Sicily, whose misdeeds will crowd the page. His brother is James of Aragon. Cf. the story of Manfred, *Purgatorio* iii. Their uncle was James of Minorca. James and Frederick, sons of Manfred's Constance, are mentioned slightly in *Purgatorio* vii. 119.

l. 135. The translator here appropriates, with slight change, a magnificent line from Marlowe—such a line as Dante would have written had he written in English.

l. 140. The Venetian ducat and the florin were the standard coins everywhere. Counterfeiting them was a form of repudiation which the integrity of needy rulers was often unable to resist. Cf. the story of Master Adam, *Inferno* xxx. 70-90.

l. 144. The speaker foresees that the mountain-rampart is soon to prove of no avail, since the Queen of Navarre has become the consort of Philip the Fair of France.

ll. 145 ff. Henry of Lusignan, a beastly little king, who keeps pace with the 'great powers' in evil doing.

CANTO VENTESIMO

- 1 Quando colui che tutto il mondo alluma
dell' emisferio nostro sì discende,
che il giorno d' ogni parte si consuma,
4 Lo ciel, che sol di lui prima s' accende,
subitamente si rifà parvente
per molte luci, in che una risplende.
7 E quest' atto del ciel mi venne a mente,
come il segno del mondo e de' suoi duci
nel benedetto rostro fu tacente;
10 Però che tutte quelle vive luci,
vie più lucendo, cominciaron canti
da mia memoria labili e caduci.
13 O dolce amor, che di riso t' ammanti,
quanto parevi ardente in quei flailli,
ch' avieno spirto sol di pensier santi!
16 Poscia che i cari e lucidi lapilli,
ond' io vidi ingemmato il sesto lume,
poser silenzio agli angelici squilli,
19 Udir mi parve un mormorar di fiume,
che scende chiaro giù di pietra in pietra,
mostrando l' ubertà del suo cacume.
22 E come suono al collo della cetra
prende sua forma, e sì come al pertugio
della sampogna vento che penetra,
25 Così, rimosso d' aspettare indugio,
quel mormorar dell' aquila salissi
su per lo collo, come fosse bugio.
28 Fecesi voce quivi, e quindi uscissi
per lo suo becco in forma di parole,
quali aspettava il core ov' io le scrissi.
31 'La parte in me che vede, e pate il sole
nell' aquile mortali,' incominciommi,
'or fisamente riguardar si vuole,
34 Perchè dei fochi, ond' io figura sommi,
quelli onde l' occhio in testa mi scintilla,
e' di tutti i lor gradi son li sommi.

CANTO XX

The Eagle continues to Discourse

- 1 When he who sheds through all the world his ray
is from our hemisphere descending so
that everywhere the daylight fades away,
4 The sky, ablaze with him short while ago,
is suddenly rekindled to our ken
by many lights that answer to one glow:
7 And I recalled this heavenly action when
the ensign of the world and of its head
grew silent in the blessed beak again;
10 For all those living luminaries, made
brighter than ever, were beginning chants
out of my memory to lapse and fade.
13 O sweet Love, veiled in smiling radiance,
how ardent didst thou seem in those canorous
flutes that breathed only holy meditative!
16 After the bright and precious brilliants o'er us,
wherewith I saw the sixth heaven glittering,
had made an end of their angelic chorus,
19 It seemed to me I heard a murmuring
stream that runs limpid down from stone to stone
showing the plenty of its mountain spring.
22 And as upon the cistern's neck the tone
assumes its form, and in reed instrument
the vent-holes mould the breathing through it blown,
25 Thus, brooking no delay, incontinent
did that soft murmur of the Eagle float
up through the neck, as if it were a vent;
28 There became voice, and issued from the throat
out through the beak, with words in unison
with longing of the heart whereon I wrote.
31 'That part in me which sees, and braves the sun
in mortal eagles,' it prelusive said,
'should now attentively be gazed upon;
34 For of the fires whereof my form is made,
those are in all their grades of most renown
wherewith the eye is sparkling in my head.

- 37 Colui che luce in mezzo per pupilla,
fu il cantor dello Spirito Santo,
che l'arca traslatò di villa in villa.
- 40 Ora conosce il merto del suo canto,
in quanto effetto fu del suo consiglio,
per lo remunerar ch'è altrettanto.
- 43 Dei cinque che mi fan cerchio per ciglio,
colui che più al becco mi s'accosta,
la vedovella consolò del figlio.
- 46 Ora conosce quanto caro costa
non seguir CRISTO, per l'esperienza
di questa dolce vita, e dell'opposta.
- 49 E quel che segue in la circonferenza
di che ragiono, per l'arco superno,
morte indugiò per vera penitenza.
- 52 Ora conosce che il giudizio eterno
non si trasmuta, quando degno preco
fa crastino laggiù dell'odierno.
- 55 L'altro che segue, con le leggi e meco,
sotto buona intenzion che fe' mal frutto,
per cedere al pastor, si fece Greco.
- 58 Ora conosce come il mal dedutto
dal suo bene operar non gli è nocivo,
avvegna che sia il mondo indi distrutto.
- 61 E quel che vedi nell'arco declivo,
Guglielmo fu, cui quella terra plora
che piange Carlo e Federico vivo.
- 64 Ora conosce come s'innamora
lo ciel del giusto rege, ed al sembiante
del suo fulgore il fa vedere ancora.
- 67 Chi crederebbe giù nel mondo errante,
che Rifeo Troiano in questo tondo
fosse la quinta delle luci sante?
- 70 Ora conosce assai di quel che il mondo
veder non può della divina grazia,
benchè sua vista non discerna il fondo.'
- 73 Quale allodetta che in aere si spazia
prima cantando, e poi tace contenta
dell'ultima dolcezza che la sazia,

- 37 Who midmost as the pupil glitters down,
he was the Holy Spirit's laureate
who bore about the Ark from town to town;
- 40 Now knows he his song's merit adequate,
so far as subject to his will's control,
by the reward which is proportionate.
- 43 Of five who curve along my brow, that soul
neighbouring nearest to the beak of me
did the poor widow for her son console;
- 46 Now knows he dear the ransom is if we
follow not Christ, by the experience
of this sweet life, and of the contrary.
- 49 Who next, along on the circumference
in question, follows on the upward way
delayed his death by very penitence;
- 52 Now knows he that Eternal Judgement may
be altered never, though a worthy prayer
on earth below to-morrows the to-day.
- 55 The next, to set the Pastor in the chair,
ill fruitage gathering from good intents,
made Greek himself, the laws, and me down there;
- 58 Now knows he that the evil consequence
of his good deed gives him no cause to grieve,
although the world go all to ruin thence.
- 61 Next in the downward curve dost thou perceive
him who was William, whom those lands regret
which weep that Charles and Frederick still live;
- 64 Now knows he how the love of Heaven is set
on a just king, and the effulgency
of his appearance makes it patent yet.
- 67 Down in the erring world who would agree
that Trojan Rhipeus in this round were fit
the fifth among the holy lights to be?
- 70 Now knows he much whereof our human wit
in Grace Divine can catch not any gleam,
although his vision cannot fathom it.'
- 73 Like to the lark that in the morning beam
upsoars, first singing and thereafter still,
rapt with the sweetness of her song supreme,

- 76 Tal mi semiò l'imgo della impronta
dell' eterno piacere, al cui disio
ciascuna cosa, quale ell' è, diventa.
- 79 Ed avvegna ch' io fossi al dubbiar mio
lì quasi vetro allo color che il veste,
tempo aspettar tacendo non patio;
- 82 Ma della bocca: 'Che cose son queste?'
mi pinse con la forza del suo peso;
per ch' io di corruscar vidi gran feste.
- 85 Poi appresso con l' occhio più acceso
lo benedetto segno mi rispose,
per non tenermi in ammirar sospeso:
- 88 'Io veggio che tu credi queste cose,
perch' io le dico, ma non vedi come;
sì che, se son credute, sono ascose.
- 91 Fai come quei che la cosa per nome
apprende ben; ma la sua quiditate
veder non può, se altri non la prome.
- 94 *Regnum coelorum* violenza pate
da caldo amore e da viva speranza,
che vince la divina volontate;
- 97 Non a guisa che l' uomo all' uom sopranza,
ma vince lei perchè vuole esser vinta,
e vinta vince con sua beninanza.
- 100 La prima vita del ciglio e la quinta
ti fa maravigliar, perchè ne vedi
la region degli Angeli dipinta.
- 103 Dei corpi suoi non uscir, come credi,
Gentili, ma Cristiani, in ferma fede,
quel dei passuri, e quel dei passi piedi;
- 106 Chè l' una dello Inferno, u' non si riede
 giammai a buon voler, tornò all' ossa,
e ciò di viva speme fu mercede;
- 109 Di viva speme, che mise la possa
ne' preghi fatti a Dio per suscitarla,
sì che potesse sua voglia esser mossa.
- 112 L' anima gloriosa onde si parla,
tornata nella carne, in che fu poco,
credette in Lui che poteva aiutarla;

- 76 Such seemed the imaged Emblem of the Will
Eternal, in accordance with whose bent
created things their final ends fulfill.
- 79 And notwithstanding that my wonderment
showed through me like the colour through the glaze,
yet could it not abide the time content,
- 82 But forced by virtue of its weight the phrase
forth from my lips,—‘What wonders these!’ Oh
I saw great revelry of flashing rays! [thence
- 85 Thereon with kindling eye still more intense,
to me the Blessed Emblem made reply,
to hold me not in wondering suspense:
- 88 ‘I see that thou believ’st these things, since I
report them to thee, but dar’st not avow,
for, though believed, they are hidden from the eye.
- 91 Thou doest like that one who may well allow
a thing in name, but who cannot define
its essence if another show not how.
- 94 The Kingdom of Heaven suffers force benign
from living hope and loving fervency,
able to overcome the Will Divine;
- 97 Not as man over man wins victory,
that which is craving to be quelled they quell,
which, conquered, conquers through benignity.
- 100 The brow’s first living soul and fifth may well
astonish thee, because thou seest with those
adorned the region where the angels dwell.
- 103 These left their bodies not, as men suppose,
Gentile, but Christian, each in firm faith cleaving
to crucifixion’s past or future throes.
- 106 For one from Hell, whence none returns retrieving
good will again, did yet his bones resume,—
and living hope this guerdon was receiving,—
- 109 The living hope whence vital power should bloom
through prayer to God for his upraising made,
so that his will could move to change his doom.
- 112 The glorious spirit whereof this is said,
short while abiding in the flesh on earth,
put faith in Him who had the power to aid,

- 115 E credendo s' accesse in tanto foco
di vero amor, ch' alla morte seconda
fu degna di venire a questo gioco.
- 118 L' altra, per grazia che da sì profonda
fontana stilla, che mai creatura
non pinse l' occhio infino alla prim' onda,
- 121 Tutto suo amor laggiù pose a drittura;
per che di grazia in grazia Dio gli aperse
l' occhio alla nostra redenzion futura:
- 124 Ond' ei credette in quella, e non sofferse
da indi il puzzo più del paganesmo,
e riprendiene le genti perverse.
- 127 Quelle tre donne gli fur per battesimo,
che tu vedesti dalla destra rota,
dinanzi al battezzar più d' un millesmo.
- 130 O predestinazion, quanto remota
è la radice tua da quegli aspetti
che la prima cagion non veggion *tota!*
- 133 E voi, mortali, tenetevi stretti
a giudicar; chè noi che Dio vedemo
non conosciamo ancor tutti gli eletti;
- 136 Ed enne dolce così fatto scemo,
perchè il ben nostro in questo ben s' affina,
che quel che vuole Iddio e noi volemo.'
- 139 Così da quella imagine divina,
per farmi chiara la mia corta vista,
data mi fu soave medicina.
- 142 E come a buon cantor buon citarista
fa seguitar lo guizzo della corda,
in che più di piacer lo canto acquista;
- 145 Sì, mentre che parlò, sì mi ricorda
ch' io vidi le due luci benedette,
pur come batter d' occhi si concorda,
- 148 Con le parole mover le fiammette.

- 115 And so belief enkindled on his hearth
true love, that when returned he to the grave
he was found fit to come unto this mirth.
- 118 So deep a fountain yielded grace to save
the other soul, no eye, however bright,
of any creature pierced its primal wave;
- 121 And so in righteousness was his delight
that our redemption in the future, more
and more by Grace was opened to his sight:
- 124 Wherefore he put his trust therein, nor bore
thenceforth the stench from heathendom arising,
reproving the perverted folk therefor.
- 127 To him, a thousand years ere solemnizing
of baptism, those three maids thou sawst, who wheeled
beside the dexter wheel, stood for baptizing.
- 130 Predestination! Ah, how far afield
thy root from vision of their intellect
to whom the First Cause is not all revealed!
- 133 And be ye, mortals, closely circumspect
in judging, forasmuch as we, who see
the very God, know not yet all the elect:
- 136 And in such lack is our felicity,
for in this good our own good we refine
so that with Will Divine our wills agree.'
- 139 Thus by that emblematic form divine,
to make me feel the limits of my vision,
was dealt to me delightful medicine.
- 142 As on the chorded lute the good musician
pinching the strings supports the singer good,
thus making more delightful the rendition,
- 145 So I remember, while he thus pursued,
beholding those two blessèd lustres dance
accordant, as the eyes in winking would,
- 148 Moving their flamelets with that utterance.

NOTES

This Canto seems intended to qualify and temper the harshness of the solution given to those 'obstinate questionings' of ll. 70-81 of the foregoing Canto. The lines celebrating the six just princes—David, Trajan, Hezekiah, Constantine, William the Good, Rhipeus—are ranged in symmetry as formal as that of the statues in the Sainte Chapelle.

ll. 10 ff. If we could hear the emerging stars of evening sing vespers, as once those of morning sang matins, we might realize this sublime appeal to the Poet's eye and ear.

ll. 19 ff. The voices of the Just, blending in the neck of the Eagle, issue like the sound of falling water, or of musical notes. Perhaps these lines suggested to Byron the noble comparison,

‘the voices of the dead

Sound like a distant torrent's fall.’

l. 37. David. Cf. 2 Samuel vi; *Purgatorio* x.

ll. 37-72. With these twelve tercets in elaborate parallel construction may be compared, for the form, the thirteen in *Purgatorio* xii (25-63).

ll. 43-45. Trajan. *Purgatorio* x. 73 ff.

ll. 49-54. The fullest account of the answer to the prayer of Hezekiah is that in Isaiah xxxviii, with which cf. 2 Kings xx. 1-7 and 2 Chronicles xxxii. 24-6.

ll. 55-60. Constantine. *Inferno* xix. 115; *Paradiso* vi. 1. The supposed Donation of Constantine, the consequences of which were thought by Dante to have been so disastrous, was long afterwards proved to be, as Bryce puts it, ‘the most stupendous of medieval forgeries’.

ll. 61 ff. William the Good of Sicily and Apulia (1154-1189), whose reign seems to have given Sicily the happiest and most peaceful score of years in the entire history of an island which has endured more (and far longer) misgovernment than even Ireland. Here was a king whom Dante could wholly praise, as he could not St. Louis.

l. 68. Rhipeus the Trojan (*Aeneid*, II. 426).

ll. 104-5. One of the passages that defy literal translation: ‘firm in faith, he (Rhipeus) in the feet that were to suffer and he (Trajan) in the feet that had suffered’.

ll. 106-17. St. Gregory made effectual fervent prayer for Trajan, who returned to this life long enough to repent and be redeemed. The legend was accepted by St. Thomas Aquinas and presumably by the Catholic world.

ll. 118-120. The image recalls that of *Purgatorio* viii. 68:

‘Him . . . who doth so hide

His own first wherefore that it has no ford.’

The primal wave—first fountain-head whence issue the waters of grace—is at the bottom of a spring unfathomed by the most piercing eye.

ll. 128 ff. Cf. *Purgatorio* xxix. 121-9. The orthodox Poet, who had appeared to close the door of grace to the unbaptized heathen, here by a large interpretation of the rite of baptism opens that door so wide that we wonder at the exclusion of such a soul as Virgil. Old Benvenuto da Imola aptly points out that this passage is a pendant to lines 106-14 in the preceding Canto. The obscurity of Rhipeus, whom we know only from two lines of Virgil, gave full scope to the Poet’s imagination. The Eagle rewards him for the abnegation of his mere human sense of justice, by revealing to him that two of the most glorious of all these souls had received baptism through faith and hope and love.

CANTO VENTESIMOPRIMO

- 1 Già eran gli occhi miei rifissi al volto
della mia Donna, e l'animo con essi,
e da ogni altro intento s'era tolto;
4 E quella non ridea, ma: 'S'io ridessi,'
mi cominciò, 'tu ti faresti quale
fu Semelè, quando di cener fessi;
7 Chè la bellezza mia, che per le scale
dell'eterno palazzo più s'accende,
com'hai veduto, quanto più si sale,
10 Se non si temperasse, tanto splende,
che il tuo mortal potere al suo fulgore
sarebbe fronda che tuono scoscende.
13 Noi sem levati al settimo splendore,
che sotto il petto del Leone ardente
raggia mo misto giù del suo valore.
16 Ficca dietro agli occhi tuoi la mente,
e fa di quegli specchi alla figura,
che in questo specchio ti sarà parvente.'
19 Chi sapesse qual era la pastura
del viso mio nell'aspetto beato,
quand'io mi trasmutai ad altra cura,
22 Conoscerebbe quanto m'era a grato
ubbidire alla mia celeste scorta,
contrappesando l'un con l'altro lato.
25 Dentro al cristallo che il vocabol porta,
cerchiando il mondo, del suo chiaro duce,
sotto cui giacque ogni malizia morta,
28 Di color d'oro in che raggio traluce,
vid'io uno scaleo eretto in suso
tanto che nol seguiva la mia luce.
31 Vidi anco per li gradi scender giuso
tanti splendor, ch'io pensai ch'ogni lume
che par nel ciel quindi fosse diffuso.
34 E come per lo natural costume
le pole insieme al cominciar del giorno
si movono a scaldar le fredde piume;

CANTO XXI

Heaven of Saturn

- 1 Already on my Lady's countenance
mine eyes were bended, and my mind withdrew
with them from every other circumstance;
4 Nor was she smiling, but began thereto:
'Were I to smile thou wouldst become like fair
Semelë, when she dust and ashes grew;
7 Because my beauty on the Palace stair
eternal, shining in more bright relief
as thou hast seen, with our ascending there,
10 If not attempered, would be past belief
effulgent, so that thy poor mortal sense
would be but as the thunder-blasted leaf.
13 Raised are we to the Seventh Splendour, whence,
now warmed beneath the Lion's burning breast,
rains down its mitigated influence.
16 Let thy mind follow where thine eyes request,
and let them mirrors be for that reflection
which in this mirror shall be manifest.'
19 Whoso could know how great was the refection
mine eyes found in her features sanctified,
when drawn away perforce in new direction,
22 Might comprehend, by weighing the one side
with the other, how delighted I became
to do the bidding of my heavenly Guide.
25 Within the crystal that doth bear the name
the world around of its bright Leader, who
so ruled that perished every deed of blame,
28 I saw a Ladder all of golden hue
burnished with light, and lifted up so high
mine eyes were unavailing to pursue;
31 Then saw so many splendours downward fly
along its rungs, all light the stars distil
had, it appeared to me, been shed thereby.
34 And as, at bidding of their nature's will,
jackdaws together flock at break of day,
bestirring them to warm their plumage chill;

- 37 Poi altre vanno via senza ritorno,
altre rivolgon sè onde son mosse,
ed altre roteando fan soggiorno;
- 40 Tal modo parve e me che quivi fosse
in quello sfavillar che insieme venne,
sì come in certo grado si percosse;
- 43 E quel che presso più ci si ritenne,
sì fe' sì chiaro, ch'io dicea pensando:
'Io veggio ben l'amor che tu m'accenne.'
- 46 Ma quella, ond'io aspetto il come e il quando
del dire e del tacer, si sta, ond'io
contra il disio fo ben ch'io non domando.
- 49 Perch'ella, che vedeva il tacer mio
nel veder di Colui che tutto vede,
mi disse: 'Solvi il tuo caldo disio.'
- 52 Ed io incominciai: 'La mia mercede
non mi fa degno della tua risposta,
ma per colei che il chieder mi concede,
- 55 Vita beata, che ti stai nascosta
dentro alla tua letizia, fammi nota
la cagion che sì presso mi t'ha posta;
- 58 E di' perchè si tace in questa rota
la dolce sinfonia di Paradiso,
che giù per l'altre suona sì devota.'
- 61 'Tu hai l'udir mortal sì come il viso,'
rispose a me; 'onde qui non si canta
per quel che Beatrice non ha riso.
- 64 Giù per li gradi della scala santa
discesi tanto, sol per farti festa
col dire, e con la luce che m'ammanta:
- 67 Nè più amor mi fece esser più presta,
chè più e tanto amor quinci su ferve,
sì come il fiammeggiar ti manifesta;
- 70 Ma l'alta carità, che ci fa serve
pronte al consiglio che il mondo governa,
sorteggia qui, sì come tu osserve.'
- 73 'Io veggio ben,' diss'io, 'sacra lucerna,
come libero amore in questa corte
basta a seguir la provvidenza eterna;

- 37 Thereafter there are some who fly away
without returning, others fly off where
they started from, and others, wheeling, stay:
- 40 In such a fashion came together there,
methought, that scintillating company,
soon as it lighted on a certain stair;
- 43 And one, which nearest us appeared to be,
became so bright, I murmured in my thought:
'Well I perceive thy love that signals me.'
- 46 But she, by whom the How and Where is taught
of speech and silence, pauses, whence aright
I do, against desire, inquiring not.
- 49 Whence she who saw my silence in the sight
of That One to whose seeing all is shown,
bade me,—'Appease thy yearning appetite!'
- 52 And I began: 'No merit of mine own
renders me worthy that thou make reply,
but for her sake who bids me ask, make known
- 55 To me, O soul in bliss, enshrouded by
the joyfulness within thyself abounding,
what cause has put thee near me thus? and why
- 58 Keeps utter silence, where this sphere is rounding,
the dulcet symphony of Paradise
down through the others so devoutly sounding?'
- 61 'Thy mortal eye and ear are both amiss,'
he answered, 'here aloft no songs are sung
for the same cause that smiles not Beatrice.
- 64 Down on the sacred ladder rung by rung
so far descended I to make thee graced
with words, and with the radiance round me flung;
- 67 Nor was it greater love that made me haste,
for equal love, or more, burns up above,
as makes the flaming clearly manifest;
- 70 But we, as prompted by Exalted Love,
to serve the purpose of the world so burn:
'tis love allots,—thou seest the mode thereof.'
- 73 'Full well, O holy lamp, do I discern
how love, left free, may in this Court suffice
for following the Providence eterne;

- 76 Ma quest' è quel, ch' a cerner mi par forte,
perchè predestinata fosti sola
a questo officio tra le tue consorte.'
- 79 Nè venni prima all' ultima parola,
che del suo mezzo fece il lume centro,
girando sè come veloce mola.
- 82 Poi rispose l' amor che v' era dentro:
'Luce divina sopra me s' appunta,
penetrando per questa ond' io m' inventro;
- 85 La cui virtù col mio veder congiunta
mi leva sopra me tanto, ch' io veggio
la somma essenza della quale è munta.
- 88 Quinci vien l' allegrezza ond' io fiammeggio;
perchè alla vista mia, quant' ella è chiara,
la chiarezza della fiamma pareggio.
- 91 Ma quell' alma nel ciel che più si schiara,
quel Serafin che in Dio più l' occhio ha fisso,
alla domanda tua non satisfara;
- 94 Perocchè sì s' inoltra nell' abisso
dell' eterno statuto quel che chiedi,
che da ogni creata vista è scisso.
- 97 Ed al mondo mortal, quando tu riedi,
questo rapporta, sì che non presuma
a tanto segno più mover li piedi.
- 100 La mente che qui luce, in terra fuma;
onde riguarda, come può laggiù
quel che non puote, perchè il ciel l' assuma.'
- 103 Sì mi prescrisser le parole sue,
ch' io lasciai la questione, e mi ritrassi
a domandarla umilmente chi fue.
- 106 'Tra due liti d' Italia surgon sassi,
e non molto distanti alla tua patria,
tanto che i tuoni assai suonan più bassi,
- 109 E fanno un gibbo che si chiama Catria,
disotto al quale è consecrato un ermo,
che suol esser disposto a sola latrìa.'
- 112 Così ricominciommi il terzo sermo;
e poi continuando disse: 'Quivi
al servizio di Dio mi fei sì fermo,

- 76 But ever this is baffling to mine eyes:
wherefore among thy consorts thou alone
hast been predestinate to this emprise?’
- 79 Before I uttered forth the final tone,
the light an axis of its middle made,
rapidly whirling as in mill the stone.
- 82 Thereon the loving spirit in it said:
‘Focused on me is radiance divine
piercing the mesh of that around me shed,
- 85 Whereof the virtue and my sight combine
to lift me so above myself, I see
the Fount Supreme whence doth this lustre shine.
- 88 Thence comes the rapture all aflame in me,
for to my vision as it grows more bright
I match a flame of equal clarity.
- 91 But soul in Heaven with most access of light,
Seraph whose eye is most on God intent,
could to thy question not reply aright,
- 94 For it is gulfed in the arbitrament
unfathomed, of eternal law’s control,
where all created sight is vainly bent.
- 97 Carry this back to every mortal soul
on thy return, that men no more presume
to lift their feet toward so high a goal.
- 100 The mind that here is flame, on earth is fume;
consider then if it down there can see
that which it cannot, although Heaven assume.’
- 103 His words imposed such limit upon me,
I put the question by, and did no more
than humbly ask of his identity.
- 106 ‘Craggs rise in Italy ’twixt shore and shore,
and from thy fatherland not far away,
so high, the thunderstorms below them roar,
- 109 Swelling aloft to a height called Catria,
whereunder is a sacred hermitage
once destined only as a place to pray.’
- 112 So for the third time spoke to me that sage;
continuing: ‘There, on God’s service bent,
so used was I my hunger to assuage

- 115 Che pur con cibi di liquor d' ulivi,
lievemente passava caldi e gieli,
contento nei pensier contemplativi.
- 118 Render solea quel chiostro a questi cieli
fertilmente, ed ora è fatto vano,
sì che tosto convien che si riveli.
- 121 In quel loco fu' io Pier Damiano;
e Pietro peccator fu nella casa
di Nostra Donna in sul lito Adriano.
- 124 Poca vita mortal m'era rimasa,
quando fui chiesto e tratto a quel cappello,
che pur di male in peggio si travasa.
- 127 Venne Cephass, e venne il gran vasello
dello Spirito Santo, magri e scalzi,
prendendo il cibo di qualunque ostello.
- 130 Or voglion quinci e quindi chi rincalzi
li moderni pastori, e chi li meni,
tanto son gravi, e chi dretro gli alzi.
- 133 Copron dei manti loro i palafreni,
sì che due bestie van sott' una pelle:
O pazienza, che tanto sostieni!
- 136 A questa voce vid' io più fiammelle
di grado in grado scendere e girarsi,
ed ogni giro le facea più belle.
- 139 Dintorno a questa vennero, e fermarsi,
e fero un grido di sì alto suono,
che non potrebbe qui assimigliarsi;
- 142 Nè io lo intesi, sì mi vinse il tuono.

- 115 On bread with olive juice for condiment,
that here I passed the seasons hot and cold
lightly, in thoughts contemplative content.
- 118 That cloister once bore fruitage manifold
unto these heavens, but now it yields no more,
as must perforce hereafter soon unfold.
- 121 There Peter Damian was the name I bore;
Peter the Sinner was I in the fane
of Our own Lady on the Adrian shore.
- 124 To me did little mortal life remain,
when called to take, against my own accord,
that hat which shifts from bad to worse again.
- 127 Came Cephas, the great Vessel of the Lord
came lean and barefoot, taking bit and sup
from whatsoever hospitable board.
- 130 Now serving-men are need to hold up
fat modern pastors, one on either side
and one before and one behind to prop.
- 133 Their furs o'erflow the palfreys which they ride
(how much, O Patience, hast thou yet to bear!)
so that two beasts go underneath one hide.'
- 136 Flames saw I at such cry from stair to stair
descending and whirling round in multitude,
at every whirl becoming still more fair.
- 139 Around this soul they flocking came, and stood,
and lifted up such a resounding shout
that here there could be no similitude,
- 142 Nor, thunderstricken, could I make it out.

NOTES

ll. 4 ff. Ascending to the Heaven of Saturn, Beatrice withholds her smile. Bound by an oath, Jove reluctantly appeared in full glory to his beloved Semelë, who was consumed by the splendour. Cf. Exodus xxxiii. 18 ff., 'Man shall not see me and live.'

l. 12. Aristotle, the scientific authority whose views were current for so many ages, held that thunder, rather than lightning, is the destructive agent. Hence the references all through modern poetry to the thunder-bolt, thunder-stone, and the blasting effect of thunder.

ll. 13-15. While Dante's eyes and mind have been intent upon the face of Beatrice in expectance of the wonted smile, he has been borne into the sphere of the contemplative planet, which seems really to have been then in the Sign of Leo. Thus the chilling influence, attributed by astrology to the rays of Saturn, is tempered.

ll. 28 ff. Corresponding to the cross in Mars (symbol of crusading knighthood) and to the eagle in Jupiter (symbol of imperial justice), here in the contemplative planet is the golden ladder by using which man becomes taller than his reach. Bright spirits come flocking down like those Jacob saw in his dream in the desert of Luz. The comparison of these to such plain corvine birds as daws (or rooks) is an example of that plainness of speech, 'understood of the people', referred to in the *Epistle to Can Grande* as suitable to comedy.

l. 52. Dante humbly asks two questions of the spirit.

l. 61. The eyes of Dante could not bear the smile; his muddy vesture of decay is impervious to the music.

ll. 67-78. The spirit has fully answered the second of Dante's questions. To the other he only replies that he has come through love, not indeed greater love than that which informs the others, but because so allotted by the high love that makes all eager to serve Supreme Wisdom. But the Poet craves to know more than this—to know why among so many this particular spirit has been selected: a question that probes, and probes in vain, for the hidden roots of human experience. Infinite must be the wisdom of the historian who could lay bare the springs of those apparently casual contacts that, once made, appear inevitable, as they certainly are inalterable.

ll. 91 ff. Cf. Canto xix, ll. 52-7, and note.

ll. 106-26. He who makes the pleasant journey from Gubbio to Fano has before his eyes for awhile a little to the right of his road the great arch or 'hump' of Monte Catria on which, in a lovely echo-haunted nook beneath the mountain brow, lies the venerable Benedictine monastery ('hermitage') of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana. There in the eleventh century (1041) Peter Damian became abbot. He tells us that, in the house of Our Lady on the shore of the Adriatic, he had humbly gone by the name of Peter the Sinner. He was so useful and outstanding a supporter of Hildebrand (afterward Gregory VII) that he was forced, against his will, to accept an appointment as cardinal-bishop ('the hat that shifts from bad to worse'). There is a persistent tradition that Dante tarried awhile during his exile in this lonely place of contemplation, where his spirit seems still more than elsewhere to hover.

ll. 127-35. In these lines, especially in the last one, is the most concentrated expression of the contrast between the primitive follower of Jesus and the modern false shepherd to be found anywhere even in the DIVINE COMEDY. For one of these whom Dante may have had in mind, though their name was legion, see the note to *Paradiso* xii. 124. The *Ottimo Comento*, by one who lays claim to personal acquaintance with the Poet, remarks: 'This lesson is clear; everybody has seen it. A beast is the rider because, issuing from the rule of his order, he is like the beast governed by appetite instead of reason; and a beast is the palfrey, and both are covered with a single cardinal cloak.' Cf. also the comments of Benvenuto da Imola (who lectured at Bologna on the comedy of Dante in the fourteenth century), cited by Longfellow and by Vernon.

CANTO VENTESIMOSECONDO

- 1 Oppresso di stupore alla mia guida
mi volsi, come parvol che ricorre
sempre colà dove più si confida:
- 4 E quella, come madre che soccorre
subito al figlio pallido ed anelo
con la sua voce che il suol ben disporre,
- 7 Mi disse: 'Non sai tu che tu sei in cielo?
e non sai tu che il cielo è tutto santo,
e ciò che ci si fa vien da buon zelo?
- 10 Come t'avrebbe trasmutato il canto,
ed io ridendo, mo pensar lo puoi,
poscia che il grido t'ha mosso cotanto;
- 13 Nel qual, se inteso avessi i preghi suoi,
già ti sarebbe nota la vendetta,
che tu vedrai innanzi che tu muoi.
- 16 La spada di quassù non taglia in fretta,
nè tardo, ma' che al parer di colui,
che disiando o temendo l'aspetta.
- 19 Ma rivolgiti omai inverso altrui;
ch' assai illustri spiriti vedrai,
se com' io dico l'aspetto ridui.'
- 22 Com' a lei piacque gli occhi dirizzai,
e vidi cento sperule, che insieme
più s'abbellivan coi mutui rai.
- 25 Io stava come quei che in sè ripreme
la punta del disio, e non s'attenta
del domandar, sì del troppo si teme.
- 28 E la maggiore e la più luculenta
di quelle margarite innanzi fessi,
per far di sè la mia voglia contenta.
- 31 Poi dentro a lei udi': 'Se tu vedessi,
com' io, la carità che tra noi arde,
li tuoi concetti sarebbero espressi;
- 34 Ma perchè tu aspettando non tarde
all' alto fine, io ti farò risposta
pure al pensier di che sì ti riguarde.

CANTO XXII

St. Benedict; Dante's Natal Constellation

- 1 Plunged in bewilderment I turned me thence
round to my Guide, even as a little child
runs ever where he feels most confidence;
- 4 And promptly as a mother's cadence mild
is wonted to give courage to her son
pallid and gasping,—so her words beguiled
- 7 My fear: 'Enfolds thee not the benison
of Heaven where all is holy? and canst thou doubt
that zeal for good prompts what in Heaven is done?
- 10 What perturbation had been brought about
both by the singing and my smiling eye,
when thou hast been so startled by the shout?
- 13 Wherein, if thou hadst understood their cry
which is a prayer, already would be clear
the vengeance thou shalt see before thou die.
- 16 Smites never down in haste the sword from here,
nor tardily, excepting in his view
who waits for it in longing or in fear.
- 19 But look about thee now to something new;
thou shalt see spirits most illustrious,
turning thy face round as I bid thee do.'
- 22 Compliant to her will, I turned me thus,
and saw a hundred little globes of fire
by interchange of light more beauteous.
- 25 Like one who blunts the edge of his desire
within himself, became I, diffident
of question, lest I overmuch aspire.
- 28 And the most lustrous and preëminent
among those pearly lights began to advance,
to make my wish concerning it content.
- 31 Within it then I heard: 'Could but thy glance
like mine perceive our interflaming Love,
thy tacit thought would have found utterance;
- 34 But lest thou linger from the goal above
I will make answer even to the scope
of the request thou art so chary of.

- 37 Quel monte a cui Cassino è nella costa,
fu frequentato già in sulla cima
dalla gente ingannata e mal disposta.
- 40 E quel son io che su vi portai prima
lo nome di Colui, che in terra addusse
la verità che tanto ci sublima;
- 43 E tanta grazia sopra me rilusse,
ch' io ritrassi le ville circostanti
dall' empio culto che il mondo sedusse.
- 46 Questi altri fochi tutti contemplanti
uomini furo, accesi di quel caldo
che fa nascer li fiori e i frutti santi.
- 49 Qui è Maccario, qui è Romoaldo,
qui son li frati miei che dentro ai chiostri
fermar li piedi e tennero il cor saldo.'
- 52 Ed io a lui: 'L' affetto che dimostri
meco parlando, e la buona sembianza
ch' io veggio e noto in tutti gli ardor vostri,
- 55 Così m' ha dilatata mia fidanza,
come il sol fa la rosa, quando aperta
tanto divien quant' ell' ha di possanza.
- 58 Però ti prego, e tu, padre, m' accerta
s' io posso prender tanta grazia, ch' io
ti veggia con imagine scoperta.'
- 61 Ond' egli: 'Frate, il tuo alto disio
s' adempierà in sull' ultima spera,
dove s' adempion tutti gli altri e il mio.
- 64 Ivi è perfetta, matura ed intera
ciascuna disianza; in quella sola
è ogni parte là dove sempr' era;
- 67 Perchè non è in loco, e non s' impola,
e nostra scala infino ad essa varca,
onde così dal viso ti s' invola.
- 70 Infin lassù la vide il patriarca
Jacob porgere la superna parte,
quando gli apparve d' Angeli sì carica.
- 73 Ma per salirla mo nessun diparte
da terra i piedi, e la regola mia
rimasa è per danno delle carte.

- 37 Where lies Cassino on the mountain slope,
up to the very summit dwelt of yore
the folk perverse who in delusion grope;
40 And I am he who first up thither bore
the name of Him who brought the human race
the Truth enabling us so high to soar:
43 Then shone upon me so abounding Grace
that from the impious worship which misled
the world, I drew each neighbour dwelling-place.
46 These other fires were men whose spirits fed
on Contemplation, kindled by that heat
whence holy flowers and holy fruits are bred.
49 Here Romuald and here Macarius meet
all my good brethren of the cloister who
kept steadfast heart and stayed their truant feet.'
52 And now I spoke: 'The love thou givest to view
talking with me, and the benevolence
which I perceive aglow in all of you,
55 Dilate as genially my confidence
as the sun doth the rose, till she uncase
her petals and exhale her perfume thence.
58 Wherefore I pray,—and tell me if such grace,
O Father, may perchance upon me shine,—
that I may see thee with uncovered face.'
61 'Brother, up in the final sphere divine,'
said he, 'shall thy exalted wish be granted,
where all the others are fulfilled, and mine.
64 There is mature and perfect and unscanted
every desire; and in that realm of day
alone all parts eternally are planted;
67 For it is not in space, nor doth it sway
on poles; and thither doth our ladder go,
whence it is fading from thy sight away.
70 The Patriarch Jacob saw it long ago
extend its upper reaches heavenward yon,
when angels up and down seemed thronging so.
73 But now to clamber thither raises none
his feet from earth, and, though my Rule remain,
waste is the paper it is written on.

- 76 Le mura che soleano esser badia,
fatte sono spelonche, e le cocolle
sacca son piene di farina ria.
- 79 Ma grave usura tanto non si tolle
contra il piacer di Dio, quanto quel frutto
che fa il cor dei monaci sì folle.
- 82 Chè quantunque la Chiesa guarda, tutto
è della gente che per Dio domanda;
non di parenti, nè d'altro più brutto.
- 85 La carne dei mortali è tanto blanda,
che giù non basta buon cominciamento
dal nascer della quercia al far la ghianda.
- 88 Pier cominciò senz' oro e senza argento,
ed io con orazioni e con digiuno,
e Francesco umilmente il suo convento.
- 91 E se guardi il principio di ciascuno,
poscia riguardi là dov' è trascorso,
tu vederai del bianco fatto bruno.
- 94 Veramente Jordan volto retrorso
più fu, e il mar fuggir, quando Dio volse,
mirabile a veder, che qui il soccorso.'
- 97 Così mi disse, ed indi si ricolse
al suo collegio, e il collegio si strinse;
poi come turbo tutto in su s' avvolse.
- 100 La dolce Donna dietro a lor mi pinse
con un sol cenno su per quella scala,
sì sua virtù la mia natura vinse;
- 103 Nè mai quaggiù, dove si monta e cala
naturalmente, fu sì ratto moto,
ch' agguagliar si potesse alla mia ala.
- 106 S' io torni mai, lettore, a quel devoto
trionfo, per lo quale io piango spesso
le mie peccata, e il petto mi percoto,
- 109 Tu non avresti in tanto tratto e messo
nel foco il dito, in quanto io vidi il segno
che segue il Tauro, e fui dentro da esso.
- 112 O gloriose stelle, o lume pregno
di gran virtù, dal quale io riconosco
tutto, qual che si sia, lo mio ingegno;

- 76 The abbey walls, that used to be a fane,
are become robber dens, and every cowl
a sack that doth corrupted meal contain.
- 79 But heavy usance levies smaller toll
counter to Will Divine, than fruits that curse
with such insanity the monkish soul.
- 82 What Holy Church may have to disburse
belongs to them who in God's name invoke;
not to one's kindred, nor to others worse.
- 85 The flesh of mortals is so frail that folk
make good beginnings there, which do not hold
till acorns ripen on the sapling oak.
- 88 Peter made his beginning without gold
or silver, I with fast and orison,
and Francis humbly set about his fold.
- 91 And scanning the beginning of each one,
and then where it has wandered, thou wilt see
how white has been converted into dun.
- 94 But Jordan backward turned, in verity,
and ocean at God's will in flight perdue,
more wondrous were than rescue here would be.'
- 97 He spoke, and turned to his companions, who
surrounding him, together closed their throng,
then upward like a whirlwind all withdrew.
- 100 My gentle Lady urged me then along
with a mere wafture up that mystic stair,
so was her power upon my nature strong;
- 103 Nor in our rising and descending here
by natural law, has ever been a flight
so swift as with my pinion to compare.
- 106 Reader, as I to that devout delight
hope to return, for whose sake I deplore
oft-times my sins, and on my bosom smite,
- 109 Thou wouldst have plucked thy finger nevermore
out of the fire, ere I beheld the Sign
after the Bull, and was within its core!
- 112 O glorious stars, whose influences shine
pregnant with power, to whom is honour due
for whatsoever genius may be mine,

- 115 Con voi nasceva e s'ascondeva vosco
quegli ch' è padre d'ogni mortal vita,
quand' io senti' da prima l'aer Tosco;
- 118 E poi quando mi fu grazia largita
d'entrar nell'alta rota che vi gira,
la vostra region mi fu sortita.
- 121 A voi devotamente ora sospira
l'anima mia per acquistar virtute
al passo forte che a sè la tira.
- 124 'Tu sei sì presso all'ultima salute,'
cominciò Beatrice, 'che tu dei
aver le luci tue chiare ed acute.
- 127 E però prima che tu più t'inlei,
rimira in giù, e vedi quanto mondo
sotto li piedi già esser ti fei;
- 130 Sì che il tuo cor, quantunque può, giocondo
s'appresenti alla turba trionfante,
che lieta vien per questo etera tondo.'
- 133 Col viso ritornai per tutte quante
le sette spere, e vidi questo globo
tal, ch'io sorrisi del suo vil sembiante;
- 136 E quel consiglio per migliore approbo
che l'ha per meno; e chi ad altro pensa
chiamar si puote veramente probo.
- 139 Vidi la figlia di Latona incensa
senza quell'ombra che mi fu cagione
per che già la credetti rara e densa.
- 142 L'aspetto del tuo nato, Iperione,
quivi sostenni, e vidi com' si move
circa e vicino a lui Maia e Dione.
- 145 Quindi m'apparve il temperar di Giove
tra il padre e il figlio; e quindi mi fu chiaro
il variar che fanno di lor dove.
- 148 E tutti e sette mi si dimostraro
quanto son grandi, e quanto son veloci,
e come sono in distante riparo.
- 151 L'aiuola che ci fa tanto feroci,
volgendom' io con gli eterni Gemelli,
tutta m'apparve dai colli alle foci:
- 154 Poscia rivolsi gli occhi agli occhi belli.

- 115 With you was dawning, darkening with you
He who is Sire of all mortality,
when my first breath of Tuscan air I drew;
118 And then, when gift of Grace had made me free
of the high wheeling sphere wherein ye roll,
your very region was assigned to me.
121 To you devoutly now suspires my soul,
virtue soliciting and consecration
for the hard passage to the final goal.
124 'Thou art so near the Ultimate Salvation,'
so Beatrice began, 'that it is meet
to have eyes keen and purified from passion.
127 Hence, before deeplier immersed in it,
look down below and see what world expanse
I have already put beneath thy feet;
130 So that thy heart with utmost jubilance
confront the Triumph of the multitude
who through this ether-sphere blithely advance.'
133 Then one and all the Seven Spheres I viewed
with backward gaze, and saw this globe of dust
such that I smiled at its poor likelihood;
136 And to his counsel I most largely trust
who holds it cheapest; and who turns him thence
to other thoughts may well be reckoned just.
139 Latona's daughter kindled on my sense
without that shadow making her appear
such that I held her once both rare and dense.
142 Hyperion, I could endure up here
the radiance of thy son, and marked how move
Maia and Dionē round about him near.
145 Thence I perceived the tempering of Jove
father and son between, and thence the mode
of all their variations as they rove.
148 Thence to me all the seven planets showed
how vast they are, how swift they are, and how
far, far apart they are in their abode.
151 With the Eternal Twins revolving now,
I saw our madding little threshing floor
spread out from river mouth to mountain brow:
154 Then turned I to the beauteous eyes once more.

NOTES

l. 7. Stricken with bewilderment, the Poet is reassured by Beatrice.

l. 31. Speaks St. Benedict.

ll. 37 ff. The Monastery of Monte Cassino, one of the most venerable monuments of the Christian world.

l. 49. There were two saints in Egypt named Macarius both of whom were disciples of St. Anthony and both died near the end of the fourth century. St. Macarius of Alexandria stood in much the same relation to monasticism in the Orient as did St. Benedict in the West. St. Romuald reformed the Benedictine Order five centuries after its foundation, and in 1012 founded the monastery of Camaldoli in the mountains of the Casentino not far from La Verna (*Paradiso* xi. 106). For their beauty as well as for their sacred associations these spots, as well as Monte Cassino, are still visited.

l. 52. Dante's prayer to Benedict.

l. 68. The heavenly ladder, whereby contemplation may climb beyond eyeshot. Cf. Canto xxi, l. 29-30.

ll. 73 ff. The 'dread voice' again.

l. 78. The women of the people (*mulierculae*), in whose language the Poet says he composes his comedy, will not be slow to understand what he means by comparing the contents of the monks' cowls to maggoty flour. (Cf. *Epistle to Can Grande*, Sec. 10.)

l. 88. Acts iii. 6; *Inferno* xix. 94-5.

ll. 100 ff. Ascent to the Heaven of the Stars.

l. 109. The translation misses here a vivid touch: 'Thou wouldst not have been so quick to draw out and put thy finger in the fire'; the thing happens so quickly that the touch and go appear simultaneous—in fact the finger is *out* before it is well *in*. A like effect is aimed at in the striking inversion in *Paradiso* ii. 24.

ll. 112 ff. Dante invokes his natal constellation, the Eternal Twins, in which the sun was rising and setting when first he drew the breath of life. This passage fixes the season of his birth. We know that the year was 1265; in that year the sun was in Gemini from May 18 to June 17. So much can positive science derive from the lines. Interesting as is the fact, it has very little to do with the exhilaration communiated to the spirit by the noble invocation.

ll. 133 ff. Survey of the solar system.

ll. 139 ff. The Poet, assuming that the reader is by this time familiar with the deities identified with the planets, enumerates them by allusion to their parents—all save Jove, whose complexion was supposed to be tempered by the counter-influences of cold Saturn and hot Mars.

l. 140. That other side of the moon 'Unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman, blank to Zoroaster on his terrace'—and without the spots discussed in Canto ii.

l. 153. The whole spread of the land from the mountains to the mouths of the rivers. The foregoing passage perhaps suggested the description of Satan's view of the universe in *Paradise Lost*, III. 555-61. If so, Milton's lines afford an instructive example of the manner in which a poet's imagination may be kindled at another's fire.

CANTO VENTESIMOTERZO

- 1 Come l' augello intra l' amate fronde,
posato al nido dei suoi dolci nati,
la notte che le cose ci nasconde,
4 Che per veder gli aspetti disciati,
e per trovar lo cibo onde li pasca,
in che i gravi labor gli sono aggrati,
7 Previene il tempo in sull' aperta frasca,
e con ardente affetto il sole aspetta,
fiso guardando pur che l' alba nasca;
10 Così la Donna mia si stava eretta
ed attenta, rivolta inver la plaga
sotto la quale il sol mostra men fretta;
13 Sì che veggendola io sospesa e vaga,
fecimi quale è quei, che disiendo
altro vorria, e sperando s' appaga.
16 Ma poco fu tra uno ed altro quando,
del mio attender, dico, e del vedere
lo ciel venir più e più rischiarando:
19 E Beatrice disse: 'Ecco le schiere
del trionfo di CRISTO, e tutto il frutto
ricolto del girar di queste spere.'
22 Pareami che il suo viso ardesse tutto,
e gli occhi avea di letizia sì pieni,
che passar mi convien senza costrutto.
25 Quale nei plenilunii sereni
Trivia ride tra le ninfe eterne,
che dipingono il ciel per tutti i seni,
28 Vid' io, sopra migliaia di lucerne,
un Sol che tutte quante l' accendea,
come fa il nostro le viste superne;
31 E per la viva luce trasparrea
la lucente sustanzia tanto chiara
nel viso mio, che non la sostenea.
34 O Beatrice, dolce guida e cara!
Ella mi disse: 'Quel che ti sopranza
è virtù, da cui nulla si ripara.'

CANTO XXIII

Vision of the Host of the Redeemed

- 1 Even as a bird the well-loved leaves among,
having reposed with her sweet nestling brood
while night has over all her mantle flung,
4 Who, that she may adventure for their food,
delighting in hard toil, and that she may
see the loved pledges of her motherhood,
7 Anticipates the hour on open spray,
and fired with eagerness awaits the light,
vigilant ever until break of day:
10 So was my Lady standing at full height
alert and watchful, lifting up her face
thither where most the sun retards his flight;
13 Whence I, observant of her eagerness,
became like one who wistfully doth pant
for his desire, and so takes heart of grace.
16 But now the interval of time was scant,—
I mean of my suspense until aware
that more and more the heaven grew radiant.
19 And Beatrice said: ‘Behold the army fair
of Christ Triumphant,—all the harvest raised
by whirling influence of every sphere.’
22 It seemed to me that all her features blazed
and such a flood of rapture filled her eye
that I must pass it by perforce unphrased.
25 As at still midnight when the moon is high
Trivia smiles among the nymphs eterne
who brighten every quarter of the sky,
28 Above a thousand lustres saw I burn
one Sun, enkindling round it all and some,
as does our sun the other lights supern.
31 And that illuminating Masterdom
shot down a living splendour so intense
into mine eyes that they were overcome.
34 Oh, Beatrice, dear guiding influence!
‘That which subdues thee here,’ she said to me,
‘is virtue against which is no defence.

- 37 Quivi è la Sapienza e la Possanza
ch' apri le strade intra il cielo e la terra,
onde fu già sì lunga disianza.'
- 40 Come foco di nube si disserra,
per dilatarsi sì che non vi cape,
e fuor di sua natura in giù s' atterra,
- 43 La mente mia così, tra quelle dape
fatta più grande, di sè stessa uscìo,
e che si fesse, rimembrar non sape.
- 46 'Apri gli occhi e riguarda qual son io;
tu hai vedute cose, che possente
sei fatto a sostener lo riso mio.'
- 49 Io era come quei che si risente
di vision obblita, e che s' ingegna
indarno di ridurlasi alla mente,
- 52 Quando io udi' questa profferta, degna
di tanto grado, che mai non si estingue
del libro che il preterito rassegna.
- 55 Se mo sonasser tutte quelle lingue
che Polinnia con le suore fero
del latte lor dolcissimo più pingue,
- 58 Per aiutarmi, al millesmo del vero
non si verria, cantando il santo riso,
e quanto il santo aspetto facea mero.
- 61 E così, figurando il Paradiso,
convien saltar lo sacrato poema,
come chi trova suo cammin reciso.
- 64 Ma chi pensasse il ponderoso tema,
e l' omero mortal che se ne carica,
nol biasmerebbe, se sott' esso trema.
- 67 Non è peggior da picciola barca
quel che fendendo va l' ardita prora,
nè da nocchier ch' a sè medesimo parca.
- 70 'Perchè la faccia mia sì t' innamora,
che tu non ti rivolgi al bel giardino
che sotto i raggi di CRISTO s' infiora?
- 73 Quivi è la rosa in che il Verbo Divino
carne si fece; quivi son li gigli,
al cui odor si prese il buon cammino.'

- 37 Here is the Wisdom and Supremacy
that opened between Heaven and Earth the road
whereto men yearned of old so urgently.'
- 40 As fire expands till it unlocks the cloud
that cannot longer hold it, and doth fall
earthward against its nature, in such mode
- 43 My spirit found amid that festival
enlargement, and the bound of self forsook,
nor what it then became can now recall.
- 46 'Open thine eyes,' resumed she then, 'and look
upon my very nature; thou hast seen
things that enable thee my smile to brook.'
- 49 I was like one who feels the spell again
of a forgotten vision, and doth try
to bring it back to memory, in vain,
- 52 When I received this proffer, worth so high
tribute of thanks as could not be effaced
out of the chronicle of time gone by.
- 55 Not all the tongues by Polyhymnia graced,
that both from her and from her sisters drew
their lyric milk most honied to the taste,
- 58 Could tell a thousandth part of what is true,
hymning the holy smile of Beatrice
and on her holy face what light it threw.
- 61 Whence, in depicting Paradise, at this
the sacred Poem leaps perforce the theme,
like one whose way is cut by an abyss.
- 64 But whoso notes its weight will never deem
me blameable if mortal shoulder bear
but tremblingly a burden so supreme.
- 67 For little bark can be no passage where
the wave is cleft by my adventurous prow,
nor yet for pilot who would labour spare.
- 70 'Why so enamoured of my face art thou,
and turnest not to the fair garden-close
blooming beneath the rays of Christus now?
- 73 The Word Divine became in yonder Rose
incarnate; yonder are the lilies white
whose fragrance did the way of life disclose.'

- 76 Così Beatrice. Ed io, ch' a' suoi consigli
tutto era pronto, ancora mi rendei
alla battaglia dei debili cigli.
- 79 Come a raggio di sol, che puro mei
per fratta nube, già prato di fiori
vider, coperti d' ombra, gli occhi miei;
- 82 Vid' io così più turbe di splendori,
folgorati di su di raggi ardenti,
senza veder principio dei fulgori.
- 85 O benigna virtù che sì gl' imprenti,
su t' esaltasti per largirmi loco
agli occhi lì, che non eran possenti.
- 88 Il nome del bel fior ch' io sempre invoco
e mane e sera, tutto mi ristrinse
l' animo ad avvisar lo maggior foco.
- 91 E come ambo le luci mi dipinse
il quale e il quanto della viva stella,
che lassù vince, come quaggiù vinse,
- 94 Per entro il cielo scese una facella,
formata in cerchio a guisa di corona,
e cinsela, e girossi intorno ad ella.
- 97 Qualunque melodia più dolce suona
quaggiù, e più a sè l' anima tira,
parrebbe nube che squarciata tuona,
- 100 Comparata al sonar di quella lira,
onde si coronava il bel zaffiro,
del quale il ciel più chiaro s' inzaffira.
- 103 'Io sono amore angelico, che giro
l' alta letizia che spira del ventre
che fu albergo del nostro disiro;
- 106 E girerommi, Donna del ciel, mentre
che seguirai tuo figlio, e farai dia
più la spera suprema, perchè gli entre.'
- 109 Così la circolata melodia
si sigillava, e tutti gli altri lumi
facean sonar lo nome di MARIA.
- 112 Lo real manto di tutti i volumi
del mondo, che più ferve e più s' avviva
nell' alito di Dio e nei costumi,

- 76 So Beatrice: and I, submitting quite
to what she urged, again free scope allowed
to the contention of my feeble sight.
- 79 Just as mine eyes, themselves beneath a shroud
of shadow, have beheld a flowery lea
laughing in light that streamed through rifted cloud,
- 82 So many a splendid throng now seemed to be
lit from above by burning radiance, though
no fountain of those flashings could I see.
- 85 O Power benignant who dost mark them so,
thou hadst withdrawn thee upward to give way
before mine eyesight baffled by the glow!
- 88 The mention of the Rose whereto I pray
morning and evening, utterly subdued
my soul to contemplate her greater ray.
- 91 When with her quality and magnitude
as she transcended here up there transcending,
that living star had both mine eyes imbued,
- 94 Behold athwart the heaven a torch descending,
formed like a coronet, wherewith it crowned her,
about her in a fiery circle bending.
- 97 Whatever melody is sweet hereunder
most wooingly to wake the heart's desire,
would seem a cloud-bank rended by the thunder
- 100 Compared to the resounding of that lyre
engarlanding the Sapphire beauteous
whose holy azure tints the Heaven of Fire.
- 103 'I am the Love angelic circling thus
the lofty rapture of the womb, that blest
hostel of Him who was desired of us;
- 106 And I shall circle until thou followest
thy son, O Lady of Heaven, diviner making
the Sphere supreme because thou enterest.'
- 109 So now the circling melody was taking
the seal, and all the other lights in fine
with name of Mary into song were breaking.
- 112 That regal mantle which doth all entwine
the rolling worlds, and hath its appetite
most quickened in the breath and deeds divine,

- 115 Avea sopra di noi l' interna riva
tanto distante, che la sua parvenza
là dov' io era ancor non m' appariva.
- 118 Però non ebber gli occhi miei potenza
di seguitar la coronata fiamma,
che si levò appresso sua semenza.
- 121 E come il fantolin, che inver la mamma
tende le braccia poi che il latte prese,
per l' animo che in fin di fuor s' infiamma;
- 124 Ciascun di quci candori in su si stese
con la sua fiamma, sì che l' alto affetto
ch' egli aveano a Maria, mi fu palese.
- 127 Indi rimaser lì nel mio cospetto,
Regina coeli cantando sì dolce,
che mai da me non si partì il diletto.
- 130 Oh quanta è l' ubertà che si soffolce
in quell' arche ricchissime, che foro
a seminar quaggiù buone bobolce!
- 133 Quivi si vive e gode del tesoro
che s' acquistò piangendo nell' esilio
di Babilon, dove si lasciò l' oro.
- 136 Quivi trionfa, sotto l' alto Filio
di Dio e di Maria, di sua vittoria,
e con l' antico e col nuovo concilio,
- 139 Colui che tien le chiavi di tal gloria.

- 115 Held far remote from us and at such height
above my standing place its inner shore,
that vision of it dawned not on my sight.
- 118 Therefore mine eyes did not have power to soar
after the flame incoronate, who rose
up to her Son where He had risen before.
- 121 As little child toward the mother throws
its arms up, soon as it with milk is fed,
and grateful love in such a transport shows,
- 124 When each and all of those fair splendours shed
their light upstretching, so an infinite
love toward Mary in the act I read.
- 127 Before me still remained those splendours white,
and 'Queen of Heaven' they all so sweetly chanted
that present with me yet is the delight.
- 130 Oh, how great plenty is laid up unscanted
in those abounding coffers that of old
were husbandmen upon the ground they planted!
- 133 There live they, glad in treasure manifold
which in captivity at Babylon
they gathered up with tears, forsaking gold.
- 136 There triumphs, under the exalted Son
of God and Mary, now victorious
and with the council old and new, that one
- 139 Who holds the keys of gate so glorious.

NOTES

Now, far away from all the planetary circles, in the Eighth Heaven among the mysterious stars, we are granted a symbolic preliminary glimpse of Christ rising swiftly to highest heaven with all the fruit harvested from the whirlings of all these spheres. No wonder the enlarged spirit of the Poet breaks loose from conscient self! His sweet guide, however, recalls him, bidding him look again upon her smile to which the forgotten vision has tempered his eyes. The splendid succession of images marks a division of the theme, an unbridged chasm which the Sacred Poem must leap. What can this be but the wide transition from the world of matter to the world of pure effluence? Here again, as at the outstart, the Poet warns back the unprepared voyager. The high song concludes with the lyric homage of the winged Sapphire to the divine Mother.

l. 10. Beatrice expectant.

ll. 19 ff. The pilgrim of eternity here receives a handsel of that fullness of spiritual vision which is to be. The passage may have been suggested by Luke xv. 7. The imagery of this Canto is peculiarly lovely nor are there any jarring chords of wrath or scorn such as blare out in almost all the preceding Cantos especially toward the conclusion of each.

l. 26. Trivia is one of the synonyms for Luna or Diana that Dante found in the *Aeneid*. Other synonyms are Delia, Phoebe, daughter of Latona, one of the twin eyes of Heaven.

ll. 40-2. According to medieval physics, following the teachings of Aristotle, lightning is ignited vapour generated in the upper region of the air. When surrounded by a heavy cloud of watery vapour this igneous vapour is so constricted that it seeks the easiest way of escape. If this path of least resistance chances to be the under side of the cloud, the lightning breaks through with the sound of thunder and, contrary to its aspiring fire-nature, darts to earth. Aristotle 'compares this to the way in which a nut, or the stone of a fruit, when squeezed between the fingers will, in spite of its weight, shoot upwards' (Moore, *Studies*, I. 130). For this violent image of the fiery vapour bursting the cloud, cf. close of *Inferno* xxiv. This theory seems to involve some notion of the expansive force of gases.

ll. 46 ff. Dante's eyes given virtue to see the smile of Beatrice.

l. 67. Cf. beginning of Canto ii.

ll. 73-5. The Rose is the Virgin Mary; the lilies are the

white-robed host of the triumph of Christ, who make manifest the fragrance of his knowledge (2 Corinthians, ii. 14).

l. 85. The Sun of Heaven shows just so much light as the mortal eye can bear.

l. 94. The splendour and music of Gabriel.

l. 99. See note to ll. 40-2.

l. 112. Probably the ninth sphere, 'that first moved' (Primum Mobile). We are looking up from the sphere of the stars to the under side (*interna riva*) of that swiftest wheeling sphere whose function it is to convert Divine creative energy into the various motions of the universe, shedding down secondary influences upon the lives and fates of men.

ll. 121-6. They had received 'the kingdom of God as a little child'.

ll. 130-5. Those who have been faithful husbandmen in the Vineyard of the Lord during the life on earth, which is compared to the Babylonian exile, have now become coffers or chests of spiritual treasure. The image is perhaps suggested by the Scriptural *Vas electionis* (vessel of election or chosen recipient of grace) of Acts ix. 15. Cf. also *Inferno* ii. 28.

ll. 136 ff. Here St. Peter is introduced at the very end of the Canto, linking it up with the next. Striking examples of this method of leading up to something of special importance are the conclusion of *Paradiso* v, of *Inferno* xxxii; and of *Paradiso* xxxii.

CANTO VENTESIMOQUARTO

- 1 'O sodalizio eletto alla gran cena
del benedetto Agnello, il qual vi ciba
sì che la vostra voglia è sempre piena;
4 Se per grazia di Dio questi preliba
di quel che cade della vostra mensa,
prima che morte tempo gli prescriba,
7 Ponete mente all' affezione immensa,
e roratelo alquanto: voi bevete
sempre del fonte onde vien quel ch' ei pensa.'
10 Così Beatrice: e quelle anime liete
si fero spere sopra fissi poli,
fiammando forte a guisa di comete.
13 E come cerchi in tempra d' orioli
si giran sì, che il primo, a chi pon mente,
quieto pare, e l' ultimo che voli,
16 Così quelle carole differente-
mente danzando, della sua ricchezza
mi si facean stimar veloci e lente.
19 Di quella ch' io notai di più bellezza
vid' io uscire un foco sì felice,
che nullo vi lasciò di più chiarezza;
22 E tre fiata intorno di Beatrice
si volse con un canto tanto divo,
che la mia fantasia nol mi ridice;
25 Però salta la penna, e non lo scrivo,
chè l' imagine nostra a cotai pieghe,
non che il parlare, è troppo color vivo.
28 'O santa suora mia, che sì ne preghe
devota, per lo tuo ardente affetto
da quella bella spera mi disleghe.'
31 Poscia, fermato il foco benedetto,
alla mia Donna dirizzò lo spiro,
che favellò così com' io ho detto
34 Ed ella: 'O luce eterna del gran viro,
a cui nostro Signor lasciò le chiavi,
ch' ei portò giù di questo gaudio miro,

CANTO XXIV

St. Peter examines him concerning Faith

- 1 'O chosen fellowship of the Lamb Blest
at the great supper where He feeds you so
that your desire is ever set at rest,
4 Since Grace Divine doth on this man bestow
foretaste of viands from your feast above,
or ever death cut short his time below,
7 Give heed to his immeasurable love,
bedew him somewhat: ye are quaffing bowls
brimmed from the fount that he is dreaming of.'
10 So Beatrice besought; and those blithe souls
flashed out like comets streaming in the sky,
whirling in circles round determined poles.
13 And even as wheels in clock escapement ply
in such a fashion geared that motionless
appears the first one, and the last to fly,
16 Likewise those wheeling carols let me guess,
by variable measure of the dance
or swift or slow, their wealth of blessedness.
19 The carol that seemed fairest to my glance
was flaming forth such plenitude of bliss
that none was left of greater radiance,
22 And swept three times encircling Beatrice
accompanied with singing so divine
that fantasy in me falls short of this:
25 I write it not, my pen must skip the line,
for hues of fancy would too coarsely glare,
let alone words, on drapery so fine.
28 'O holy sister, thy compelling prayer
devout, and with so fervent feeling made,
detaches me from yonder circle fair.'
31 After the blessed fire its motion stayed,
did it directly to my Lady turn
breathing forth what I have already said.
34 And she replied to it: 'O light eterne
of the great peer to whom our Master gave
keys he brought down of this delight supern,

- 37 Tenta costui dei punti lievi e gravi,
come ti piace, intorno della fede,
per la qual tu su per lo mare andavi.
- 40 S' egli ama bene, e bene spera, e crede,
non t'è occulto, perchè il viso hai quivi
dov' ogni cosa dipinta si vede.
- 43 Ma perchè questo regno ha fatto civi
per la verace fede, a gloriarla,
di lei parlare è buon ch' a lui arrivi.'
- 46 Sì come il baccellier s' arma, e non parla,
fin che il maestro la question propone,
per approvarla, e non per terminarla;
- 49 Così m' armava io d' ogni ragione,
mentre ch' ella dicea, per esser presto
a tal querente ed a tal professione.
- 52 'Di', buon Cristiano, fatti manifesto;
fede che è?' Ond' io levai la fronte
in quella luce onde spirava questo;
- 55 Poi mi volsi a Beatrice, ed essa pronte
sembianze femmi, perch' io spandessi
l' acqua di fuor del mio interno fonte.
- 58 'La grazia che mi dà ch' io mi confessi,'
comincia' io, 'dall' alto primipilo,
faccia li miei concetti bene espressi.'
- 61 E seguitai: 'Come il verace stilo
ne scrisse, padre, del tuo caro frate,
che mise Roma teco nel buon filo,
- 64 Fede è sustanzia di cose sperate,
ed argomento delle non parventi;
e questa pare a me sua quiditate.'
- 67 Allora udii: 'Dirittamente senti,
se bene intendi, per che la ripose
tra le sustanzie, e poi tra gli argomenti.'
- 70 Ed io appresso: 'Le profonde cose
che mi largiscon qui la lor parvenza,
agli occhi di laggiù son sì ascose,
- 73 Che l' esser loro v' è in sola credenza,
sopra la qual si fonda l' alta spene,
e però di sustanzia prende intenza;

- 37 Invite this man, on questions light or grave
as pleases thee, about the Faith to tell
wherethrough thou once didst walk upon the wave.
- 40 If loves he, hopes he, and believes he well,
is hidden not from thee who hast thine eye
where all things seen as in a picture dwell.
- 43 But it becomes him thus to testify
for the true Faith, that it be glorified,
seeing this Realm is citizenized thereby.'
- 46 As arms the bachelor, whose tongue is tied
until the master doth the question stir,
to sanction it with proof, not to decide,
- 49 Even so did I, hearing these words from her,
equip me all with answer in advance
in such a shrift to such examiner.
- 52 'Speak up, good Christian, give it utterance,
what thing is Faith?' Whereat I raised my brow
whither was breathing forth that radiance,
- 55 And then turned round to Beatrice, who now
wafted prompt signals to me that I lift
the inward sluice gate and my creed avow.
- 58 'May Grace, which is vouchsafing to me shrift
in presence of the chief Centurion,'
began I, 'mould the expression of my drift.
- 61 Father, as wrote the truthful pen thereon
of thy dear brother who set the feet of Rome
in the right path with thee, Faith's benison
- 64 Is substance of the things we hope will come,
and of invisible things the evidence:
its essence such appears to me in sum.'
- 67 Then heard I: 'Rightly dost thou catch the sense,
if comprehending why he classed it now
with substances and now with arguments.'
- 70 And I thereon: 'The deep things which allow
that glimpses of themselves should here be shown
are so concealed from mortal eye below
- 73 As to exist there in belief alone,
whereon our hope sits, founded high aloof,
whence Faith is by the name of substance known;

- 76 E da questa credenza ci conviene
sillogizzar senza avere altra vista;
però intenza di argomento tiene.’
- 79 Allora udii: ‘Se quantunque s’acquista
giù per dottrina fosse così inteso,
non gli avria loco ingegno di sofista.’
- 82 Così spirò da quell’amore acceso;
indi soggiunse: ‘Assai bene è trascorsa
d’esta moneta già la lega e il peso;
- 85 Ma dimmi se tu l’hai nella tua borsa.’
Ond’io: ‘Sì, ho sì lucida e sì tonda,
che nel suo conio nulla mi s’infora.’
- 88 Appresso uscì della luce profonda,
che lì splendeva: ‘Questa cara gioia,
sopra la quale ogni virtù si fonda,
- 91 Onde ti venne?’ Ed io: ‘La larga ploia
dello Spirito Santo, ch’è diffusa
in sulle vecchie e in sulle nuove cuoia,
- 94 E sillogismo che la m’ha conchiusa
acutamente sì che in verso d’ella
ogni dimostrazion mi pare ottusa.’
- 97 Io udii poi: ‘L’antica e la novella
proposizion che così ti conchiude,
perchè l’hai tu per divina favella?’
- 100 Ed io: ‘La prova che il ver mi dischiude
son l’opere seguite, a che natura
non scaldò ferro mai, nè battè incude.’
- 103 Risposto fummi: ‘Di’, chi t’assicura
che quell’opere fosser? Quel medesimo
che vuol provarsi, non altri, il ti giura.’
- 106 ‘Se il mondo si rivolse al Cristianesimo,’
diss’io, ‘senza miracoli, quest’uno
è tal, che gli altri non sono il centesimo;
- 109 Chè tu entrasti povero e digiuno
in campo a seminar la buona pianta,
che fu già vite, ed ora è fatta pruno.’
- 112 Finito questo, l’alta Corte santa
risonò per le spere un: ‘Dio laudamo,’
nella melode che lassù si canta.

- 76 From which belief is laid on us behoof
to argue without seeing more than it,
wherefore it takes the notion on of proof.'
- 79 Then heard I: 'If whatever men admit
for doctrine were so understood on earth,
no room would there remain for sophist wit.'
- 82 This was from that enkindled Love breathed forth,
subjoining then: 'Right well dost thou rehearse
the carats of this coinage and the worth:
- 85 But tell me if thou hast it in thy purse?'
And I: 'That have I, both so bright and round
that of its stamp to me no doubt occurs.'
- 88 Thereafter issued from the light profound
glowing above, this utterance thereto:
'This precious gem, wherein all worth we found,
- 91 Came to thee whence?' And I: 'The ample dew
of the Celestial Spirit, which is shed
over the Ancient Parchments and the New,
- 94 Is argument that hath within me bred
belief so strong that, set against its force,
all demonstration seems to me but dead.'
- 97 I heard thereon: 'The old and the new course
of argument with such conclusion fraught,
why dost thou hold it for divine discourse?'
- 100 And I: 'The very proof is to be sought
in th' after-works, whereto might never be
hot iron yet on Nature's anvil wrought.'
- 103 'Who vouches, pray,' it was replied to me,
that these works were performed? Thou dost attest
the very text affirming it to thee.'
- 106 'Though without miracles the world confessed
Christianity, this were a hundredfold
more wonderful,' I answered, 'than the rest;
- 109 For poor and hungry once into the wold
didst thou go forth to sow there the good plant,
a bramble now, which was a vine of old.'
- 112 The high and holy Court, then celebrant,
made a 'Praise God' throughout those circles ring
in such a melody as there they chant.

- 115 E quel Baron, che sì di ramo in ramo
 esaminando già tratto m'avea,
 che all' ultime fronde appressavamo,
118 Ricominciò: 'La grazia che donnea
 con la tua mente, la bocca t'aperse
 infino a qui, com'aprir si dovea;
121 Sì ch'io approvo ciò che fuori emerse;
 ma or conviene esprimer quel che credi,
 ed onde alla credenza tua s'offerse.'
124 'O santo patre, spirito che vedi
 ciò che credesti sì che tu vincesti
 ver lo sepolcro più giovani piedi,'
127 Comincia' io, 'tu vuoi ch'io manifesti
 la forma qui del pronto creder mio,
 ed anco la cagion di lui chiedesti.
130 Ed io rispondo: Io credo in uno Iddio
 solo ed eterno, che tutto il ciel move,
 non moto, con amore e con disio;
133 Ed a tal creder non ho io pur prove
 fisice e metafisice, ma dalmi
 anco la verità che quinci piove
136 Per Moisè, per profeti, e per salmi,
 per l' Evangelio, e per voi che scriveste,
 poichè l'ardente Spirto vi fece almi;
139 E credo in tre persone eterne, e queste
 credo una essenza sì una e sì trina,
 che sofferà congiunto *sono* ed *este*.
142 Della profonda condizion divina
 ch'io tocco mo, la mente mi sigilla
 più volte l' evangelica dottrina.
145 Quest'è il principio; quest'è la favilla
 che si dilata in fiamma poi vivace,
 e come stella in cielo in me scintilla.'
148 Come il signor ch'ascolta quel che i piace,
 da indi abbraccia il servo, gratulando
 per la novella, tosto ch'ei si tace;
151 Così, benedicendomi cantando,
 tre volte cinse me, sì com'io tacqui,
 l' apostolico lume, al cui comando
154 Io avea detto; sì nel dir gli piacqui.

- 115 And that great Lord who, thus examining,
had so far drawn me now from spray to spray
that near the topmost frondage poised our wing,
118 Resumed: 'The Grace whose dalliance doth so play
upon thy soul, thus far to conference
hath opened thy lips duly; and I pay
121 My commendation to what issued thence;
but now to tell thine own belief is meet,
and why it captured thine intelligence.'
124 'O holy Father, soul with so complete
discernment of thy faith, thou didst outfare,
anigh the Sepulchre, more youthful feet,'
127 Began I, 'thou wouldst have me here declare
the very essence of my prompt believing,
and also have the grounds of it laid bare.
130 And I reply: by faith am I receiving
one God, sole and eterne, the Heavens all
who moves (Himself unmoved) by love and craving.
133 And for such faith have I proofs physical
and metaphysical, nor am denied
the verity that showers from here withal
136 Through Moses, Psalms, and prophecies, beside
the Evangel, and what you Apostles writ
when by the fiery Spirit sanctified.
139 In three Eternal Persons, and to wit
one Essence I believe, so One and Trine
that *are* and *is* the syntax must admit.
142 This, the mysterious state of the Divine,
doth many a time the Gospel teaching leaven,
which stamps upon my mind its seal and sign.
145 This is the focus whence the spark is driven
which then doth into living flame dilate
and shine within me like a star in Heaven.'
148 Even as a lord who hears good tidings, straight
the story ended, presses to his breast
the servant whom he would congratulate,
151 So, by his singing rendering me blest,
three times encircled me, when ceased my voice,
that apostolic Light at whose behest
154 I spoke: so did he in my words rejoice.

NOTES

ll. 1-9. Beatrice prays for Dante.

l. 13. Cf. the comparison at end of Canto x.

l. 22. The fairest carol sweeps around Beatrice.

l. 25. Cf. xxiii. 62. It is as impossible to put this divine music into words as to depict Paradise in the face of Beatrice. Dante well knew that no art can be expressed in terms of another: a lesson which those who attempt to 'illustrate' the Poem with the pencil have not learned.

l. 34. The light of St. Peter.

ll. 46 ff. Picture of an examination such as the Poet had undergone at the university.

l. 64. Definition of faith drawn from St. Paul (Heb. xi. 1).

l. 69. The word substance appears to be used in its medieval philosophical sense of *substrate*: the being or essence that underlies the subordinate categories which schoolmen distinguished as quantity, quality, relation, action, passion, place where, time when, posture, habit. Milton, more than three centuries later, personifies all these in his college poem, 'At a Vacation Exercise', so proving that much the same scholastic philosophy still held sway in the schools, even after the time of Francis Bacon. Faith, like substance, while itself invisible, is the proof of things unseen.

l. 74. Faith is the substance—that which stands under and supports hope.

l. 91. Faith based on Scripture.

l. 100. Divine because attested by miracle.

ll. 103-5. 'This is arguing in a circle', objects the examiner.

ll. 106 ff. The conversion of the world through the agency of a few humble men would have been more wonderful than a miracle.

l. 126. By faith did Peter first enter the sepulchre, although John had reached it first. John xx. 1-8.

l. 127. Dante's own belief and its grounds.

l. 141. That it is correct to make the name of the Holy Trinity the subject either of a singular or a plural verb.

l. 152. The light of St. Peter now encircles Dante as it had first encircled Beatrice.

Canto Ventesimoquinto

CANTO VENTESIMOQUINTO

- 1 Se mai continga che il poema sacro,
al quale ha posto mano e cielo e terra,
sì che m' ha fatto per più anni macro,
4 Vinca la crudeltà che fuor mi serra
del bello ovil, dov' io dormii agnello
nimico ai lupi che gli danno guerra;
7 Con altra voce omai, con altro vello
ritornerò poeta, ed in sul fonte
del mio battesimo prenderò il cappello;
10 Perocchè nella Fede, che fa conte
l' anime a Dio, quivi entra' io, e poi
Pietro per lei sì mi girò la fronte.
13 Indi si mosse un lume verso noi
di quella spera ond' uscì la primizia
che lasciò Cristo dei vicari suoi.
16 E la mia Donna piena di letizia
mi disse: 'Mira, mira, ecco il Barone,
per cui laggiù si visita Galizia.'
19 Sì come quando il colombo si pone
presso al compagno, e l' uno all' altro pande,
girando e mormorando, l' affezione,
22 Così vid' io l' un dall' altro grande
principe glorioso essere accolto,
laudando il cibo che lassù li prande.
25 Ma poi che il gratular si fu assolto,
tacito *coram me* ciascun s' affisse,
ignito sì che vinceva il mio volto.
28 Ridendo allora Beatrice disse:
'Inclita vita, per cui la larghezza
della nostra basilica si scrisse,
31 Fa risonar la speme in questa altezza;
tu sai che tante fiate la figure,
quante Jesù ai tre fe' più chiarezza.'
34 'Leva la testa, e fa che t' assicuri;
chè ciò che vien quassù dal mortal mondo,
convien ch' ai nostri raggi si maturi.'

CANTO XXV

St. James examines Him concerning Hope

- 1 If ever it happen that the Sacred Song
which Heaven and Earth have set their hand to so
that it has made me lean for seasons long,
4 Vanquish the cruelty that bars me now
from the fair sheepfold where, a lamb, I lay
enemy to the wolves that work it woe,
7 With other voice, with other fleece, that day
returning poet, will I from my font
baptismal take the coronal of bay;
10 For there the Faith I entered, that is wont
to make souls known of God, and through that rite
did Peter then encircle thus my front.
13 Then from that spherul garland moved a light
tow'rd us, from whence had issued the first Head
whom Christ left of His vicars. At such sight
16 My Lady full of rapture to me said:
'Look, look, behold the Baron for whose grace
Galicia below is visited.'
19 As, circling nearer to the nesting place
and cooing to his mate, alights the dove,
and both pour forth affection, in like case
22 I saw one great and glorious Prince with love
and welcome by that other grandeur greeted,
praising the food which feeds them thereabove.
25 But when the gratulation was completed,
silent in front of me they both stopped short,
enkindled so, mine eyes fell down defeated.
28 Then Beatrice smiled forth what I report:
'Illustrious Life, who didst in bounty write
the perfect gifts of our Imperial Court,
31 Do thou make Hope resound upon this height,
for thou dost hope as often typify
as Jesus granted to the three most light.'
34 'Be of good cheer and lift thy head on high,
for all ascending here from mortal stress
must in our mellowing rays to ripen lie.'

- 37 Questo conforto dal foco secondo
mi venne; ond' io levai gli occhi ai monti,
che gl' incurvaron pria col troppo pondo.
- 40 'Poichè per grazia vuol che tu t' affronti
lo nostro Imperadore, anzi la morte,
nell' aula più segreta co' suoi Conti;
- 43 Sì che veduto il ver di questa corte,
la speme che laggiù bene innamora
in te ed in altrui di ciò conforte:
- 46 Di' quel che ell' è, e come se ne infiora
la mente tua, e di' onde a te venne:
così seguì 'l secondo lume ancora.
- 49 E quella pia, che guidò le penne
delle mie ali a così alto volo,
alla risposta così mi prevenne:
- 52 'La Chiesa militante alcun figliuolo
non ha con più speranza, com' è scritto
nel sol che raggia tutto nostro stuolo;
- 55 Però gli è concesso che d' Egitto
venga in Jerusalemme per vedere,
anzi che il militar gli sia prescritto.
- 58 Gli altri due punti, che non per sapere
son domandati, ma perch' ei rapporti
quanto questa virtù t' è in piacere,
- 61 A lui lasc' io; chè non gli saran forti,
nè di iattanza, ed egli a ciò risponda,
e la grazia di Dio ciò gli comporti.'
- 64 Come discente ch' a dottor seconda,
pronto e libente, in quel ch' egli è esperto,
perchè la sua bontà si disasconda:
- 67 'Speme,' diss' io, 'è uno attender certo
della gloria futura, il qual produce
grazia divina e precedente merto.
- 70 Da molte stelle mi vien questa luce;
ma quei la distillò nel mio cor pria,
che fu sommo cantor del sommo duce.
- 73 "Sperino in te" nella sua teodia
dice, "color che sanno il nome tuo:"
e chi nol sa, s' egli ha la fede mia?

- 37 The Second Fire did with this comfort bless;
whence to the hills I raised mine eyes, before
bowed heavily by radiant excess.
- 40 'Since of his grace desires our Emperor
that thou meet face to face before thy death
his baronage within the secret door,
- 43 That, seeing this Court truly, thou draw breath
till in thyself and others thou relume
the Hope which well below enamoureth,—
- 46 Tell what hope is, and how therewith abloom
thy spirit, and tell whence it came to thee':
so speaking, did the Second Light resume.
- 49 And she who with compassionate sympathy
to so high flight my fledgy wings beguiled,
with answer thus anticipated me:
- 52 'Church militant has not a single child
richer in hope, as read we in the fire
of that Sun which throughout our host has smiled;
- 55 And hence it was vouchsafed to his desire
to come from Egypt to Jerusalem
to see, before the limit of his hire.
- 58 The other two points,—since thou askest them
not for thy knowing, but that he report
to men this virtue as thy dearest gem,—
- 61 To him I leave; he will not find them thwart
nor matter of boast; let him reply thereto,
nor may the grace of God in him come short.'
- 64 I answered even as willing pupils do
the master, who are glad, when competent,
that their proficiency be brought to view:
- 67 'Hope is the expectation confident
of future glory, fountain that doth stream
from Grace Divine and merit that forewent.
- 70 Stars many cause this light on me to beam,
but who first made it through my bosom shine
was supreme singer of the Guide Supreme.
- 73 So speaks he in his Psalmody divine: [who
"Hope they in Thee who know Thy name,"—and
can know it not, having like faith with mine?

- 76 Tu mi stillasti con lo stillar suo
nell' epistola poi, sì ch' io son pieno,
ed in altrui vostra pioggia repluo.'
- 79 Mentr' io diceva, dentro al vivo seno
di quello incendio tremolava un lampo
subito e spesso, a guisa di baleno.
- 82 Indi spirò: 'L' amore ond' io avvampo
ancor ver la virtù, che mi seguette
infin la palma, ed all' uscir del campo,
- 85 Vuol ch' io respiri a te, che ti dilette
di lei; ed emmi a grato che tu diche
quello che la speranza ti promette.'
- 88 Ed io: 'Le nuove e le scritture antiche
pongono il segno, ed esso lo mi addita,
dell' anime che Dio s' ha fatte amiche.
- 91 Dice Isaia, che ciascuna vestita
nella sua terra fia di doppia vesta,
e la sua terra è questa dolce vita.
- 94 E il tuo fratello assai vic più digesta,
là dove tratta delle bianche stole,
questa rivelazion ci manifesta.'
- 97 E prima, appresso al fin d' este parole,
Sperent in te di sopra noi s' udi,
a che risposer tutte le carole;
- 100 Poscia tra esse un lume si schiarì,
sì che, se il Cancro avesse un tal cristallo,
l' inverno avrebbe un mese d' un sol dì.
- 103 E come surge e va ed entra in ballo
vergine lieta, sol per fare onore
alla novizia, e non per alcun fallo,
- 106 Così vid' io lo schiarato splendore
venire ai due, che si volgeano a rota,
qual conveniasi al loro ardente amore.
- 109 Misesi lì nel canto e nella nota;
e la mia Donna in lor tenne l' aspetto,
pur come sposa tacita ed immota.
- 112 'Questi è colui che giacque sopra il petto
del nostro Pellicano, e questi fue
d' in sulla croce al grande officio eletto.'

- 76 Thou then didst so bedew me with his dew
in thine Epistle that I am full, and pour
on others rain that showers from both of you.'
- 79 While thus I spoke, within that living core
of fire there quivered forth a flash of light
quick as chain lightning. Whereupon once more
- 82 It breathed: 'The love wherewith I flame so bright
for that same Virtue still my comforter
unto the palm and issue of the fight,
- 85 Again on thee whose joy abides in her
moves me to breathe; and I would fain be told
what is it Hope gives promise to confer?'
- 88 And I: 'The Scriptures, new as well as old,
set forth the emblem whence I understand
the bliss of souls, God's friends, the double-stoled:
- 91 Isaiah promises that all shall stand
in their own land with double raiment on,—
and this sweet life is their own fatherland;
- 94 Far more distinctly does thy brother John,
where he is treating of the robes of white,
make manifest to us this benison.'
- 97 Now first, my words being ended, from the height
'Hope they in Thee' a voice was heard to say,
the carols all responding; then a light
- 100 Among them shot forth so intense a ray
that, if the Crab held one such diamond,
winter would have a month of one sole day.
- 103 As winsome maiden rises with a bound
to go and join the dancing, honour due
giving the bride, and from no motive fond,
- 106 So saw I drawing near the other two
the brightened splendour, where they wheeled along
as it became their burning love to do.
- 109 It mingled with their measure and their song;
and gazing on them did my Lady rest
even as a bride unmoved and still of tongue.
- 112 'This, this is he who lay upon the breast
of our own Pelican; to him the award
of the great trust was from the cross addressed.'

- 115 La Donna mia così; nè però piùè
mosser la vista sua di stare attenta
poscia che prima le parole sue.
- 118 Quale è colui ch' adocchia, e s' argomenta
di vedere eclissar lo sole un poco,
che per veder non vedente diventa;
- 121 Tal mi fec' io a quell' ultimo foco,
mentrechè detto fu: 'Perchè t' abbagli
per veder cosa che qui non ha loco?
- 124 In terra è terra il mio corpo, e saragli
tanto con gli altri che il numero nostro
con l' eterno proposito s' agguagli.
- 127 Con le due stole nel beato chiostro
son le due luci sole che saliro;
e questo apporterai nel mondo vostro.
- 130 A questa voce l' infiammato giro
si quietò con esso il dolce mischio,
che si facea del suon del trino spiro,
- 133 Sì come, per cessar fatica o rischio,
li remi pria nell' acqua ripercossi
tutti si posan al sonar d' un fischio.
- 136 Ahi quanto nella mente mi commossi,
quando mi volsi per veder Beatrice,
per non poter vedere, ben ch' io fossi
- 139 Presso di lei, e nel mondo felice!

- 115 My Lady thus; not more was her regard
moved to withdraw itself from its delight
before these words of hers, or afterward.
- 118 Like one endeavouring to view aright
the eclipsing of the sun a little space,
who through long gazing grows bereft of sight,
- 121 Such, by that latest fire, became my case,
while it was said: 'Why dost thou dazzle thee
to see a thing that here can have no place?
- 124 My body is on earth, and there will be
with all the rest, until our number grow
such as to tally with the eterne decree.
- 127 With the two robes in blessèd cloister glow
only those two great Splendours who ascended;
bear this report back to your world below.'
- 130 And at this voice the flaming whirl was ended,
and therewithal was brought to quiet close
the trinal breath harmoniously blended,
- 133 As when, avoiding risk, or for repose,
the oars, that smote till now upon the wave,
all pause together when a whistle blows.
- 136 Alas! how much the mind in me misgave
when I turned round to look on Beatrice,
at having no power to see her, although I clave
- 139 Close to her side, and in the world of bliss.

NOTES

The Apostle James is less obviously identified with the virtue of Hope than are Peter with Faith and John with Love. But the repeated mention of Peter and James and John together in the Gospel narrative probably influenced Dante in the choice of James for the function he here performs. This apostle, who was put to the sword by Herod, does not appear to have been clearly distinguished in Dante's time from the other James sometimes styled 'the Less'. A widespread and romantic tradition had accrued about the name of this composite saint. He became (so ran the legend) an apostle to Spain, but returned to die in Jerusalem, whence his body was miraculously wafted to the coast of Galicia in the north-west corner of Spain. To his sacred burial place a bishop was long afterward led by a star, and for this reason the spot came to be called 'Compostela', 'the Field of the Star.' This had early become one of the three chief goals of the Christian pilgrim who, confusing the words 'Galicia' and 'Galaxy', gave to the star-sown nebulae now sometimes called the 'Milky Way' the name of the 'Way of St. James'. A list of Dante's frequent references to these matters will be found in Toynbee's 'Dictionary'.

ll. 1-12. These lines have been cut into the stone just outside the door of the Baptistry by the exiled Poet's repentant fellow-citizens; but they are far more indelibly engraved upon the Italian heart. Even a poet of Dante's stature (there has been but one!) would fail to do justice to them in English except under stress of conditions hard as those which extorted this lyric cry. The appropriateness of prefixing them to the Canto of Hope hardly requires comment.

l. 17. Froissart also terms St. James a 'baron'. He was believed to be buried at Santiago de Compostela, 'The Jerusalem of the West'.

l. 28. Beatrice, smiling, addresses the light of St. James.

l. 34. Cheering words of the Apostle to the Poet.

ll. 52 ff. Beatrice answers for Dante as to the second question, that he might not appear to boast.

l. 67. Definition of hope.

ll. 70 ff. Dante first drew it from the Psalms; next from the Epistle of James.

ll. 91-6. The passages in Isaiah referred to are lxi. 7 and 10: 'Therefore shall they receive double in their land', and 'he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation: and with the robe of righteousness he hath covered me, as a bridegroom decked with a crown, and as a bride adorned with her jewels.' Dante

connects the two passages and doubtless regards the 'garment of salvation' as distinct from the 'robe of justice' (righteousness), the one being attributed to the bridegroom, the other to the bride. Of course Dante's only authority for the Scripture text is the *Vulgate*, from which the inference in question would be easier than from the version of the Westminster divines. The reference in line 94 is to perhaps the best known passage in the *Apocalypse* (vii. 9-17).

l. 100. If the Sign of Cancer had a star as bright as the light of St. John, the winter night would be abolished.

l. 113. The pelican, supposed to feed her brood with her own blood, is an emblem of Christ in medieval art.

l. 114. For the 'great trust' cf. the Gospel of St. John xix. 26-7.

l. 124. Compare Dante's desire to see the glorified body of St. Benedict, Canto xxii. There was a legend, based on John xxi. 22-3, that the beloved disciple was translated bodily into Heaven.

ll. 136-9. The Poet's momentary blindness is attributed in the devout commentary of Madame de Choiseul to his untimely curiosity about the body of St. John. 'It is this poor curiosity that blinds him, keeping him from seeing loftier things'—namely, the glorious depth of love personified by the Apostle. (*Dante: Le Paradis D'après les Commentateurs*, by the Comtesse Horace de Choiseul.)

CANTO VENTESIMOSESTO

- 1 Mentr' io dubbiava per lo viso spento,
della fulgida fiamma che lo spense
uscì un spiro che mi fece attento,
4 Dicendo: 'Intanto che tu ti risense
della vista che hai in me consunta,
ben è che ragionando la compense.
7 Comincia dunque, e di' ove s' appunta
l' anima tua, e fa ragion che sia
la vista in te smarrita e non defunta;
10 Perchè la Donna che per questa dia
region ti conduce, ha nello sguardo
la virtù ch' ebbe la man d' Anania.'
13 Io dissi: 'Al suo piacere e tosto e tardo
vegna rimedio agli occhi che fur porte,
quand' ella entrò col foco ond' io sempr' ardo.
16 Lo ben che fa contenta questa corte,
Alfa ed O è di quanta scrittura
mi legge amore, o lievemente o forte.'
19 Quella medesima voce, che paura
tolta m' avea del subito abbarbaglio,
di ragionare ancor mi mise in cura;
22 E disse: 'Certo a più angusto vaglio
ti conviene schiarar; dicer convienti
chi drizzò l' arco tuo a tal bersaglio.'
25 Ed io: 'Per filosofici argomenti,
e per autorità che quinci scende,
cotale amor convien che in me s' imprenti;
28 Chè il bene, in quanto ben, come s' intende,
così accende amore, e tanto maggio
quanto più di bontate in sè comprende.
31 Dunque all' essenza, ov' è tanto avvantaggio
che ciascun ben che fuor di lei si trova,
altro non è ch' un lume di suo raggio,
34 Più che in altra convien che si mova
la mente, amando, di ciascun che cerne
lo vero in che si fonda questa prova.

CANTO XXVI

St. John examines Him Concerning Love

- 1 While I was trembling for my sight, forspent
by the effulgent flame, there issued thence
a breathing voice that made my heed intent,
4 Saying: 'While thou recoverest the sense
of vision which thou hast burnt out on me,
let conversation serve for recompense.
7 Begin then, and declare where centred be
thy heart's desires; and let assurance stand
that dazzled and not dead is sight in thee,
10 Because the eyes of the Lady, through this land
divine conducting thee, irradiate
the power that was in Ananias' hand.'
13 'Unto these eyes of mine, which were the gate
when she brought in the fire that burns undying,
come healing at her pleasure, soon or late.
16 The Good, to this high court all satisfying,
is Alpha and Omega of the scroll
Love reads me loudly or softly,' I said replying.
19 The selfsame voice, first lifted to control
my fear when dazzled suddenly, to large
discourse of reason called again my soul:
22 'Nay, but thy sieve more finely must discharge,'
so it resumed, 'and needs must thou reply,
who aimed thy arrows at so high a targe?'
25 'By teachings of Philosophy,' said I,
'and by authority descending hence
I bear perforce the print of love so high,
28 For Good, as such, when brought in evidence,
makes love flow forth to it in fuller stream
as it embraces more of excellence.
31 Hence to the Essence which is so supreme
that every good outside it to be traced
is but an emanation from its beam,
34 More than to any other needs must haste
in love the soul of every one not blind
to truth whereon this argument is based.

- 37 Tal vero allo intelletto mio sterne
colui che mi dimostra il primo amore
di tutte le sustanzie sempiterne.
- 40 Sternel la voce del verace autore,
che dice a Moisè, di sè parlando:
“Io ti farò vedere ogni valore.”
- 43 Sternilmi tu ancora, cominciando
l’alto preconio, che grida l’arcano
di qui laggiù sopra ogni altro bando.’
- 46 Ed io udi’: ‘Per intelletto umano,
e per autoritadi a lui concorde,
de’ tuoi amori a Dio guarda il soprano.
- 49 Ma di’ ancor, se tu senti altre corde
tirarti verso lui, sì che tu suone
con quanti denti questo amor ti morde.’
- 52 Non fu latente la santa intenzione
dell’aquila di CRISTO, anzi m’ accorsi
dove volea menar mia professione.
- 55 Però ricominciai: ‘Tutti quei morsi,
che posson far lo cor volger a Dio,
alla mia caritate son concorsi;
- 58 Chè l’essere del mondo, e l’esser mio,
la morte ch’ei sostenne perch’ io viva,
e quel che spera ogni fedel, com’ io,
- 61 Con la predetta conoscenza viva,
tratto m’hanno del mar dell’amor torto,
e del diritto m’han posto alla riva.
- 64 Le fronde onde s’infronda tutto l’orto
dell’ortolano eterno, am’ io cotanto,
quanto da lui a lor di bene è porto.’
- 67 Sì com’ io tacqui, un dolcissimo canto
risonò per lo cielo, e la mia Donna
dicea con gli altri: ‘Santo, Santo, Santo.’
- 70 E come a lume acuto si dissonna
per lo spirto visivo che ricorre
allo splendor che va di gonna in gonna.
- 73 E lo svegliato ciò che vede abborre,
sì nescia è la sua subita vigilia,
fin che l’estimativa nol soccorre;

- 37 This truth has been unfolded to my mind
by him who demonstrates to me what drew
the primal love of all the eternal kind.
- 40 It is unfolded by the Author true
to Moses, speaking of His proper worth:
“All goodness will I set before thy view.”
- 43 Thou too unfoldest it at setting forth
to cry Heaven’s secret in that herald word,
the loftiest of all heralding to earth.’
- 46 ‘By human understanding,’ then I heard,
‘in concord with authoritative writing,
thy sovran love is looking heavenward.
- 49 But further, if thou feelest other plighting
that draws thee Godward, by thy words attest
with just how many teeth this love is biting.’
- 52 Not hidden from me was the purpose blest
of the Eagle of Christ; nay, whither he would guide
my declaration became manifest.
- 55 ‘All of those bitings,’ therefore I replied,
‘of force to turn the heart to God alone,
combine to make such love in me abide:
- 58 Because the world’s existence and mine own,
His death that I might live for evermore,
and what I hope with every faithful one,
- 61 As well as the aforesaid living lore,
drew me from love perverse wherein I drowned,
and of right love have set me on the shore.
- 64 My love for blooms embowering the ground
of the eternal Gardener, is strong
in measure as His gifts in them abound.’
- 67 Soon as I paused, a strain of sweetest song
rang through the Heaven, and my Lady said,
‘O Holy, Holy, Holy!’ with the throng.
- 70 As slumber breaks when vivid light is shed,
so runs the spirit of sight to meet the burning
splendour, through tunic after tunic sped
- 73 Until the waker flinch,—for undiscerning
is consciousness before the sudden day
till judgement to his succour is returning,—

- 76 Così degli occhi miei ogni quisquilia
fugò Beatrice col raggio de' suoi,
che rifulgean da più di mille milia;
79 Onde me' che dinanzi vidi poi,
e quasi stupefatto domandai
d'un quarto lume, ch' io vidi con noi.
82 E la mia Donna: 'Dentro da que' rai
vagheggia il suo fattor l'anima prima,
che la prima virtù creasse mai.'
85 Come la fronda, che flette la cima
nel transito del vento, e poi si leva
per la propria virtù che la sublima,
88 Fec' io in tanto, in quanto ella diceva,
stupendo; e poi mi rifece sicuro
un disio di parlare, ond' io ardeva;
91 E cominciai: 'O pomo, che maturo
solo prodotto fosti, o padre antico,
a cui ciascuna sposa è figlia e nuro;
94 Devoto quanto posso a te supplico
perchè mi parli; tu vedi mia voglia,
e per udirti tosto non la dico.'
97 Tal volta un animal coperto broglia
sì che l'affetto convien che si paia
per lo seguir che face a lui l'invoglia;
100 E similmente l'anima primaia
mi facea trasparer per la coperta
quant' ella a compiacermi venia gaia.
103 Indi spirò: 'Senz' essermi profferta
da te, la voglia tua discerno meglio
che tu qualunque cosa t'è più certa,
106 Perch' io la veggio nel verace specchio
che fa di sè pareggio all'altre cose,
e nulla face lui di sè pareggio.
109 Tu vuoi udir quant' è che Dio mi pose
nell'eccelso giardino, ove costei
a così lunga scala ti dispose,
112 E quanto fu diletto agli occhi miei,
e la propria cagion del gran disdegno,
e l'idioma ch'usai e ch'io fei.

- 76 Thus from mine eyes drove Beatrice away
all motes with lustre of her own so bright
that myriads of miles was shed the ray;
- 79 Whence better than beforehand was my sight:
and I made question like one in a maze,
perceiving there before us a Fourth Light.
- 82 My Lady answered: 'Shrouded in those rays
the first soul that was made by Virtue Prime
on his Creator doth in rapture gaze.'
- 85 Even as the treetop bows from time to time
beneath the passing breeze, then rises slow
to place again through native power to climb,
- 88 While she was speaking did I waver so,
and then grew confident, though struck with awe,
such will to question set me all aglow.
- 91 And I began: 'O fruit that ripe, not raw,
alone hast been produced, O Father of yore
to whom each bride is daughter and daughter-in-law,
- 94 Devoutly as I may do I implore
thy speech with me; thou seest that I have stayed
mine utterance to speed thy speaking more.'
- 97 Sometimes a covered animal is swayed
so that its feeling necessarily
is by its undulating wrap betrayed;
- 100 And so the primal soul gave me to see,
transpiring through his screen of radiance,
how blithesome he became to pleasure me.
- 103 Then he breathed forth: 'Without thine utterance
can I more readily detect thy yearning,
than canst thou any surest circumstance,
- 106 Because in the True Mirror this discerning,
which forms of all things images sublime,
and naught such mirror unto Him is turning.
- 109 Thou wouldest know what ages since the time
God placed me in the lofty Paradise,
where taught thy Lady so long stair to climb,
- 112 And how long it was pleasant to mine eyes,
and the true reason of the scorn divine,
and the idiom I used and did devise.

- 115 Or, figliuol mio, non il gustar del legno
fu per sè la cagion di tanto esilio,
ma solamente il trapassar del segno.
- 118 Quindi onde mosse tua Donna Virgilio,
quattromila trecento e due volumi
di sol desiderai questo concilio;
- 121 E vidi lui tornare a tutti i lumi
della sua strada novecento trenta
fiatè, mentre ch' io in terra fu' mi.
- 124 La lingua ch' io parlai fu tutta spenta
innanzi assai ch' all' opra inconsumabile
fosse la gente di Nembrot attenta;
- 127 Chè nullo effetto mai razionabile,
per lo piacere uman, che rinnovella
seguendo il cielo, sempre fu durabile.
- 130 Opera naturale è ch' uom favella;
ma così o così, natura lascia
poi fare a voi secondo che v' abbella.
- 133 Pria ch' io scendessi all' infernale ambascia,
I s' appellava in terra il Sommo Bene,
onde vien la letizia che mi fascia;
- 136 *El* si chiamò da poi, e ciò conviene,
chè l' uso de' mortali è come fronda
in ramo, che sen va ed altra viene.
- 139 Nel monte che si leva più dall' onda,
fu' io con vita pura e disonesta
dalla prim' ora a quella che seconda,
- 142 Come il sol muta quadra, l' ora sesta.'

- 115 Now, not the tasted tree, O son of mine,
was solely cause of so great banishment,
but only overstepping of the line.
- 118 Down there, whence by thy Lady Virgil went,
four thousand and three hundred circles and two
of sun, I yearned for this high Parliament;
- 121 And on the solar pathway to my view
nine hundred times the lights all reawoke,
and thirty, and still breath on earth I drew.
- 124 Long silent were the accents that I spoke
before the work not to be consummated
was undertaken first by Nimrod's folk;
- 127 For never aught by reason fabricated
endured, because of human choice renewing
as heavenly influences operated.
- 130 The use of speech by man is nature's doing;
but Nature lets you shape it thus or so
as suits the fashion you may be pursuing.
- 133 Before I sank down to the Eternal Woe,
men gave the name of "Jah" to the Chief Good
whence comes the rapture round me all aglow;
- 136 Then called Him "El" as fitted to their mood;
for mortal fashions are like leaves that cling
to branch, and fall in swift vicissitude.
- 139 The Mount above the wave most towering
held me, with life first pure, and then undone,
from the first hour to that next following
- 142 The sixth, at altered quadrant of the sun.'

NOTES

ll. 8-12. St. John assures the Poet that Beatrice will do for him what Ananias did for Paul. Acts ix. 10-18. (Not to be confused with that other Ananias referred to in *Purgatorio* xx. 112.)

ll. 16-18. 'That Supreme Good wherein consists the blessedness of Heaven is the beginning and the end of the writing which Love reads in a voice more or less distinct from the book of my heart.' With this it is interesting to compare the canzone which Casella, 'met in the milder shades of Purgatory', begins to sing: 'Amor che nella mente mi ragiona'. *Purgatorio* ii. 112.

l. 28. Aristotle taught that the world is moved by the desire of all things for God.

l. 42. 'Omne bonum', 'all good', in the *Vulgate* (Exodus xxxiii. 19).

l. 44. The Apocalypse, or 'Revelation of St. John the Divine'.

l. 51. The Poet has been censured for the harsh metaphor, as being out of keeping with the 'sweetness of the subject'. But the Poet, with sure taste, attributes to the Apostle such homely imagery as is everywhere found in the Gospel narratives in dealing with the things of the 'kingdom of Heaven'. These plain images are the teeth with which Dante's lines bite into the memories of men.

ll. 64-6. The image is suggested by that of the vine and the branches in the Gospel of John xv. The sense is, briefly, that Dante loves his fellowmen in proportion to their participation in the Divine nature. As he is undergoing examination he is bound to follow very closely his theological authorities. The commentators support this by the appropriate citations from St. Thomas Aquinas and others.

ll. 70 ff. The return of the Poet's eyesight scientifically described, as science was then understood.

l. 82. The light of the first created human soul.

ll. 97 ff. A similar screen of radiance, through which joy palpitates, surrounds the spirit of Charles Martel (*Canto* viii, ll. 52-4).

ll. 106-8. Adam sees Dante's inmost desire in the mirror of the Divine Essence, wherein are perfect images of things, although no created thing is capable of reflecting an image

(pareglio) of the Deity. *Pareglio* or *parelio* may also mean 'parhelion', as Longfellow renders it. The reader will recall several instances in the Poem of such readings from the 'Divine Mirror': see especially Canto xv. 49-63; also ix. 61-2.

ll. 109 ff. What questions would you ask if face to face with him who was supposed to be not only the progenitor but the most perfect of the race? Possibly the questions of an intelligent being at the present day would not be essentially different from these: What is the antiquity of the human race? How long did man remain in the state of innocence? What was the true reason for the wrath of God? What was the first language? The question considered most important is first briefly answered: God's wrath was due to overstepping the mark, transgressing the bound. This fault, largely interpreted, consists in failure to bring one's will into harmony with the will of God. The stars in their courses fight against him who presumes to resist the stream of tendency in what we call Nature. As to the historical question, the earth has spoken and has extended our views of the history of the race almost as sublimely as astronomy has extended our conception of the immensity of the universe. As to the language spoken by man in the old stone age, we are as ignorant as was Dante of the dialect of Adam. Finally, as to the legend of the Garden, let me quote a few words from a distinguished scientist: 'In the Garden of Eden there is a tree . . . not guarded at all, perfectly open; guarded by a word of command . . .: You must not, but you can if you choose. . . . It is a very beautiful parable, and it is true. . . . In it is a great instinct for religious truth.' (Greatly condensed from an article by Sir Oliver Lodge.) Cf. notes to *Paradiso* iii. 85 and vii. 25.

ll. 139 ff. Adam states that he remained in Paradise but seven hours! This was tradition.

CANTO VENTESIMOSETTIMO

- 1 'Al Padre, al Figlio, allo Spirito Santo'
cominciò 'Gloria' tutto il Paradiso,
sì che m'inebbriava il dolce canto.
- 4 Ciò ch' io vedeva mi sembrava un riso
dell' universo; per che mia ebbrezza
entrava per l' udire e per lo viso.
- 7 O gioia! o ineffabile allegrezza!
O vita intera d' amore e di pace!
O senza brama sicura ricchezza!
- 10 Dinanzi agli occhi miei le quattro face
stavano accese, e quella che pria venne
incominciò a farsi più vivace;
- 13 E tal nella sembianza sua divenne,
qual diverrebbe Giove, s' egli e Marte
fossero augelli, e cambiassersi penne.
- 16 La provvidenza, che quivi comparte
vice ed officio, nel beato coro
silenzio posto avea da ogni parte,
- 19 Quand' io udi': 'Se io mi trascoloro,
non ti maravigliar; chè, dicend' io,
vedrai trascolorar tutti costoro.
- 22 Quegli ch' usurpa in terra il loco mio,
il loco mio, il loco mio, che vaca
nella presenza del Figliuol di Dio,
- 25 Fatto ha del cimitero mio cloaca
del sangue e della puzza, onde il perverso,
che cadde di quassù, laggiù si placa.'
- 28 Di quel color che per lo sole avverso
nube dipinge da sera e da mane,
vid' io allora tutto il ciel cosperso.
- 31 E come donna onesta, che permane
di sè sicura, e per l' altrui fallanza,
pure ascoltando, timida si fane,
- 34 Così Beatrice trasmutò sembianza;
e tal eclissi credo che in ciel fue,
quando patì la suprema Possanza.

CANTO XXVII

Ascent to the Crystalline Heaven

- 1 'To Father, Son, and to the Holy Ghost
glory,' began, with sweetness exquisite
intoxicating me, the Heavenly Host.
- 4 Seemed what I witnessed with so deep delight
a laughter of the Universe; for this
elation entered through both ear and sight.
- 7 O joy supreme! O inexpressive bliss!
O life of love and peace in ample store!
O wealth secure exempt from avarice!
- 10 Above my enraptured eyes the torches four
stood kindled, and the one that first had come
began to grow more vivid than before,
- 13 And to take on such look as might assume
bright Jupiter were he and ruddy Mars
transformed to birds, with interchange of plume.
- 16 The Providence allotting to the stars
of heaven their function and their office due,
had stilled all voices of the blessed choirs,
- 19 When I heard say: 'If I transform my hue,
marvel not, for behold incarnadine
while yet I speak will grow the others too!
- 22 He who on earth usurps that place of mine,
that place of mine, that place of mine, just now
vacant in presence of the Son Divine,
- 25 Has turned my burial ground into a slough
of blood and filth, whence the Perverted One
who fell from here takes comfort there below.
- 28 With such a crimson as the adverse sun
paints on the cloud at morn or eventide,
did I behold all Heaven suffused thereon.
- 31 And as a modest lady doth abide
sure of herself, but through another's shame
at the mere hearing becomes mortified,
- 34 So Beatrice changed semblance; and I deem
that such eclipse took place in Heaven perchance
when suffered the Omnipotence Supreme.

- 37 Poi procedetter le parole sue
con voce tanto da sè trasmutata,
che la sembianza non si mutò piùè:
- 40 'Non fu la sposa di CRISTO allevata
del sangue mio, di Lin, di quel di Cleto,
per essere ad acquisto d'oro usata;
- 43 Ma per acquisto d'esto viver lieto
e Sisto e Pio e Calisto ed Urbano
sparser lo sangue dopo molto fletto.
- 46 Non fu nostra intenzion ch' a destra mano
dei nostri successor parte sedesse,
parte dall'altra, del popol cristiano;
- 49 Nè che le chiavi, che mi fur concesse,
divenisser segnacolo in vessillo,
che contra i battezzati combattesse;
- 52 Nè ch' io fossi figura di sigillo
ai privilegi venduti e mendaci,
ond' io sovente arrosso e disfavillo.
- 55 In vesta di pastor lupi rapaci
si veggion di quassù per tutti i paschi:
O difesa di Dio, perchè pur giaci?
- 58 Del sangue nostro Caorsini e Guaschi
s'apparecchian di bere; o buon principio,
a che vil fine convien che tu caschi!
- 61 Ma l'alta provvidenza, che con Scipio
difese a Roma la gloria del mondo,
soccorrà tosto, sì com' io concipio.
- 64 E tu, figliuol, che per lo mortal pondo
ancor giù tornerai, apri la bocca,
e non asconder quel ch' io non ascondo.'
- 67 Sì come di vapor gelati fiocca
in giuso l'aer nostro, quando il corno
della Capra del ciel col sol si tocca;
- 70 In su vid' io così l'etere adorno
farsi, e fioccar di vapor trionfanti,
che fatto avean con noi quivi soggiorno.
- 73 Lo viso mio seguiva i suoi sembianti,
e seguì in fin che il mezzo, per lo molto,
gli tolse il trapassar del più avanti.

- 37 Thereon proceeded forth his utterance
with voice so greatly altered that behold!
was not more changed his very countenance:
- 40 'The Bride of Christ was nurtured not of old
on blood of mine and that of Linus good
and Cletus, to be used for acquist of gold;
- 43 But for acquist of this beatitude
did Sixtus, Pius, and Calixtus weep,
and Urban, and thereafter shed their blood.
- 46 Nor purposed we the Christian folk to keep
to right and left of our successors,—these
stigmatized goats, the others favoured sheep;
- 49 Nor were confided to my hand the Keys
to be an emblem on a banneret
for war on the baptized; nor do I please
- 52 To figure as a signet that is set
on privileges venal and untrue,
whereat my frequent blush is burning yet.
- 55 From here aloft in all the folds a crew
of ravening wolves in shepherd garb is seen:
vengeance of God, why dost thou lie perdue?
- 58 To drink our blood Gascon and Cahorsine
are making ready. Alas, must needs the end
of fair beginning be indeed so mean?
- 61 But lofty Providence that once did fend
Rome's empire of the world with Scipio,
will quickly here, I deem, some succour lend.
- 64 And thou who must return once more below
through mortal load, open thy mouth, my son,—
fail not to say what I fail not to show.'
- 67 As when our atmosphere is snowing down
in flakes the frozen vapours, when the horn
of Heaven's goat is gilded by the sun,
- 70 Such swarming flakes in triumph upward borne
seemed those who with us there had sojourn made,
and now awhile the ethereal sky adorn.
- 73 My sight was following what their wraiths displayed,
and followed till the vastness manifold
all power of penetrating farther stayed.

- 76 Onde la Donna, che mi vide assolto
dell'attendere in su, mi disse: 'Adima
il viso, e guarda come tu sei volto.'
- 79 Dall'ora ch' io avea guardato prima,
io vidi mosso me per tutto l'arco
che fa dal mezzo al fine il primo clima;
- 82 Sì ch' io vedea di là da Gade il varco
folle d'Ulisse, e di qua presso il lito
nel qual si fece Europa dolce carco.
- 85 E più mi fora scoperto il sito
di questa aiuola; ma il sol procedea
sotto i miei piedi un segno e più partito.
- 88 La mente innamorata, che donna
con la mia Donna sempre, di ridure
ad essa gli occhi più che mai ardea:
- 91 E se natura od arte fe' pasture
da pigliare occhi per aver la mente,
in carne umana o nelle sue pitture,
- 94 Tutte adunate parrebbero niente
ver lo piacer divin che mi rifulse,
quando mi volsi al suo viso ridente.
- 97 E la virtù che lo sguardo m'indulse,
del bel nido di Leda mi divelse,
e nel ciel velocissimo m'impulse.
- 100 Le parti sue vivissime ed eccelse
sì uniformi son, ch' io non so dire
qual Beatrice per loco mi scelse.
- 103 Ma ella che vedeva il mio disire,
incominciò ridendo tanto lieta,
che Dio pareva nel suo volto gioire:
- 106 'La natura del mondo, che quieta
il mezzo e tutto l'altro intorno move,
quinci comincia come da sua meta.
- 109 E questo cielo non ha altro dove
che la mente divina, in che s'accende
l'amor che il volge e la virtù ch'ei piove.
- 112 Luce ed amor d'un cerchio lui comprende,
sì come questo gli altri, e quel precinto
colui che il cinge solamente intende.

- 76 Whereon my Lady, seeing me withhold
from gazing up, commanded me: 'Now cast
thine eye down at the distance thou hast rolled.'
- 79 I saw that, so revolving, I had passed
from the first hour I looked, the whole arc through
which the first climate makes from midst to last,
- 82 Hence could the wild course of Ulysses view
past Cadiz, and well-nigh the hither shore
whereon Europa so dear burden grew.
- 85 And further surface of this threshing floor
had been uncovered, but the sun sped, turning
beneath my feet, removed a Sign and more.
- 88 Now my enamoured spirit always yearning
after my Lady, to bring back and sate
mine eyes on her, was more than ever burning.
- 91 What nature made, or art, to captivate
the eye and give a banquet to the mind
in human flesh real or delineate,
- 94 All would appear as nothing, though combined,
to the divine enjoyment glowing through me
on turning round her smiling face to find.
- 97 The power wherewith I felt that look endue me
from the fair nest of Leda tore me away
and to the fleetest heaven of all updrew me.
- 100 So uniform its parts I cannot say
which one had Beatrice chosen for my place,—
full of exceeding life and lofty they.
- 103 Then she, who saw my longing, of her grace
began with smile of so blithe innocence
that God appeared rejoicing in her face:
- 106 'The nature of the world which holds suspense
the centre and makes all else around it fare,
doth here as from its starting-point commence.
- 109 And in this heaven there is no other Where
than in the Mind Divine, wherein both move
the Love that turns and Power that sheds the sphere.
- 112 Engird it with one cincture light and love,
as it engirds the others; He alone
who girdles it is governor thereof.

- 115 Non è suo moto per altro distinto;
ma gli altri son misurati da questo,
sì come dieci da mezzo e da quinto.
- 118 E come il tempo tenga in cotal testo
le sue radici e negli altri le fronde,
omai a te puot'esser manifesto.
- 121 O cupidigia, che i mortali affonde
sì sotto te, che nessuno ha potere
di trarre gli occhi fuor delle tue onde!
- 124 Ben fiorisce negli uomini il volere;
ma la pioggia continua converte
in bozzacchioni le susine vere.
- 127 Fede ed innocenza son reperte
solo nei parvoletti; poi ciascuna
pria fugge che le guance sien coperte.
- 130 Tale balbuziando ancor digiuna,
che poi divora con la lingua sciolta
qualunque cibo per qualunque luna;
- 133 E tal balbuziando ama ed ascolta
la madre sua, che con loquela intera
disira poi di vederla sepolta.
- 136 Così si fa la pelle bianca nera,
nel primo aspetto, della bella figlia
di quei ch'apporta mane e lascia sera.
- 139 Tu, perchè non ti facci maraviglia,
pensa che in terra non è chi governi;
onde sì svia l'umana famiglia.
- 142 Ma prima che gennaio tutto si sverni,
per la centesma ch'è laggiù negletta,
ruggiran sì questi cerchi superni,
- 145 Che la fortuna, che tanto s'aspetta,
le poppe volgerà u' son le prore,
sì che la classe correrà diretta;
- 148 E vero frutto verrà dopo il fiore.'

- 115 No other measures motion all its own,
but by this mete are measured all the rest,
as ten by its half and by its fifth is shown.
- 118 And how in such a vessel Time can nest
its roots, its foliage in the others grow,
henceforward may to thee be manifest.
- 121 O Greed, who overwhelmet mortals so
beneath thyself that none has masterdom
to lift his eyes again from out thy flow!
- 124 Will does indeed in men to blossom come;
however long-continued rain and reek
convert to blighted fruit the perfect plum.
- 127 Only in little children are to seek
true faith and innocence; then both too soon
vanish before the down is on the cheek.
- 130 Many keep fast while yet they babble and croon,
who swallow, when the tongue is free to play,
whatever food under whatever moon;
- 133 And many babblers cherish and obey
their mother, who, when they can speak aright,
long for the dawning of her burial day.
- 136 Even so the skin grows swarthy, which was white
at the first aspect, of the daughter fair
of him who ushers morning and leaves night.
- 139 But lest thou shouldst as at a marvel stare,
consider none on earth is governor,
whence human household strays from thoroughfare.
- 142 But before January be no more
in winter, by the hundredth part neglected
down there, so shall these upper circles roar
- 145 That Fortune, who has been so long expected,
shall whirl the stern about where lies the boom,
so that the fleet will run the course directed;
- 148 And perfect fruit will follow on the bloom.'

NOTES

l. 10. The lights or 'torches' are the three apostles and Adam.

ll. 11-15. The light of St. Peter grows ruddy with holy indignation.

ll. 22 ff. St. Peter denounces Pope Boniface as a usurper. The contradiction between this passage and *Purgatorio* xx. 85-90, is apparent rather than real. St. Peter is here judging Boniface *sub specie eternitatis*: in the eyes of the Son of God, Boniface is a usurper and the See of Peter is vacant. But the Office itself is sacred, however unworthy the incumbent, and before the world the only recognized incumbent is Boniface. That an earthly prince should presume to constitute himself the instrument of Divine vengeance is contrary to both reason and Scripture. It is noteworthy that the great denouncer of Boniface is at the same time the adequate expresser of the horror of the Christian world for the outrage done upon the pope at Anagni by the agents of the rapacious Philip the Fourth of France.

ll. 40 ff. The same 'dread voice' that speaks in Milton's 'Lycidas' (109-32).

l. 58. Clement V was a Gascon; John XXII from Cahors, which was a financial centre noted for the extortionate practices of its usurers. It does not appear that the career of Pope John XXII did much to redeem the reputation of his native town, although before the close of his long pontificate he founded a university there. Cf. *Inferno* xi. 50.

ll. 64-6. As Cacciaguida had done (*Canto* xvii, final lines), so Peter commands the Poet to speak.

l. 70. An upward fall of snow.

ll. 79-87. Dante had revolved with the Twins through ninety degrees of the 'first climate', and could now see that portion of the earth from the Eastern Mediterranean to where Ulysses voyaged the Atlantic (*Inferno* xxvi). This superbly exhilarating passage should be read in connexion with the conclusion of *Canto* xxii; the note on *Canto* ix, *ll.* 82 ff., may also be consulted. At that time the habitable part of the globe of earth was supposed to be confined to the strip between about twelve degrees and about fifty north latitude, bounded east and west by the river Ganges and the river Ebro (principal Spanish tributary of the Mediterranean, and poetically synonymous with Cadiz, Pillars of Hercules, &c.). This portion of earth was divided longitudinally into seven zones

or climes, in the middle of the first (southernmost) of which is the meridian of Jerusalem. If the sun is on the meridian of Cadiz it is setting at Jerusalem—a circumstance which explains why Dante does not quite see the Phoenician shore where Europa became a sweet burden for the Bull (i.e. for the god so disguised). This geographical theory more than doubles the relative strength of the Mediterranean. For full discussion cf. Moore's *Studies*, III.

l. 98. The nest of Leda by metonymy for the constellated twins, Castor and Pollux.

ll. 106 ff. The crystalline heaven, 'that first moved'.

ll. 118-19. Since this invisible sphere imparts motion to the bodies whose apparent daily revolution gives man his unit of time, to image it as containing the roots of time is both philosophic and sublime. This remark might have appeared superfluous had not an American editor stigmatized the metaphor of the vase as 'grotesque'!

l. 121. The transition may seem abrupt, but Dante's imagination never soars so high as to lead him to forget the moral needs of his audience. To his poem Earth has set its hand as well as Heaven.

ll. 136-8. The sun is called 'father of all mortal life' (Canto xxii, l. 116); his daughter is the human race. The metaphor appears to suggest that the moral experience of the individual, as described in the foregoing lines, has its parallel in the life of the race, the candid innocence of whose childhood becomes blackened with the soilure of guilt. The *terzina* falls short of our Poet's usual lucidity and has been made the subject of much learned and ingenious comment.

l. 142. Roughly estimated, the error in the calendar amounted to a hundredth of a day every year (the difference between 365.25 days of the mean calendar year and 365.24 days of the supposed tropical year), so that in some thousands of years January would have been wholly 'unwintered', i.e., become a spring month. The reverse of this had happened when Julius Caesar corrected the calendar. When a still more correct calendar was finally adopted in England in 1752, the error was eleven days, in Dante's time about nine. In 1582 Gregory XIII ordered October 5 to be called October 15, and introduced the 'leap-year', &c.

l. 148. The Poet's wayward fancy leaps suddenly back to the metaphor of lines 124-6. This shift can only be justified by the principle that the king is above the law.

CANTO VENTESIMOTTAVO

- 1 Poscia che contro alla vita presente
dei miseri mortali aperse il vero
quella che imparadisa la mia mente;
4 Come in lo specchio fiamma di doppiero
vede colui che se n' alluma retro,
prima che l' abbia in vista o in pensiero,
7 E sè rivolge per veder se il vetro
gli dice il vero, e vede ch' el s' accorda
con esso, come nota con suo metro;
10 Così la mia memoria si ricorda
ch' io feci, riguardando nei begli occhi
onde a pigliarmi fece Amor la corda.
13 E com' io mi rivolsi, e furon tocchi
li miei da ciò che pare in quel volume,
quandunque nel suo giro ben s' adocchi,
16 Un punto vidi che raggiava lume
acuto sì, che il viso ch' egli affoca
chiuder conviensi per lo forte acume:
19 E quale stella par quinci più poca,
parrebbe luna locata con esso,
come stella con stella si colloca.
22 Forse cotanto quanto pare appresso
alo cinger la luce che il dipigne,
quando il vapor che il porta più è spesso,
25 Distante intorno al punto un cerchio d' igne
si girava sì ratto, ch' avria vinto
quel moto che più tosto il mondo cigne;
28 E questo era d' un altro circuncinto,
e quel dal terzo, e il terzo poi dal quarto,
dal quinto il quarto, e poi dal sesto il quinto.
31 Sopra seguiva il settimo sì sparto
già di larghezza, che il messo di Juno
intero a contenerlo sarebbe arto.
34 Così l' ottavo e il nono; e ciascheduno
più tardo si movea, secondo ch' era
in numero distante più dall' uno:

CANTO XXVIII

The Heavenly Intelligences

- 1 When she who doth imparadise my mind
had ended the veracious charge she brought
against the life of wretched humankind,—
- 4 As one whose eye has in a mirror caught
the image of a torch behind him, long
before he has it or in sight or thought,
- 7 And turns to verify if right or wrong
the mirror speak, and finds it to agree
with truth, as chimes the metre with the song,—
- 10 So did I, as I call to memory,
on looking in those eyes with beauty burning
wherewith Love made the noose for snaring me.
- 13 And, as I shifted round my look, discerning
the contents of that volume, read aright
with eye that is intent upon its turning,
- 16 I saw a Point which radiated light
so piercing that the vision, fired thereby,
is closed perforce by vividness so bright.
- 19 That star appearing smallest to our eye
would seem a moon beside its light intense,
as star is matched with star along our sky.
- 22 Perchance in distance equal to that whence
halo engirds the light that has impearled
its colour when the vapour is most dense,
- 25 So distant round the Point a circle whirled
of fire so swift its motion had outpaced
that which goes quickliest around the world;
- 28 Round this another circle swept in haste,
round that a third, a fourth the third enwound,
the fourth a fifth, and that a sixth embraced;
- 31 The seventh came afterward so wide of bound
that Juno's herald, though complete, would run
too narrow to engirdle it around;
- 34 Likewise the eighth and ninth; and slower on
did each one move according as accrued
its number farther from the point of One;

- 37 E quello avea la fiamma più sincera,
cui men distava la favilla pura;
credo però che più di lei s' invera.
- 40 La Donna mia, che mi vedeva in cura
forte sospeso, disse: 'Da quel punto
depende il cielo e tutta la natura.
- 43 Mira quel cerchio che più gli è congiunto,
e sappi che il suo muovere è sì tosto
per l' affocato amore, ond' egli è punto.'
- 46 Ed io a lei: 'Se il mondo fosse posto
con l' ordine ch' io veggio in quelle rote,
sazio m' avrebbe ciò che m' è proposto.
- 49 Ma nel mondo sensibile si puote
veder le volte tanto più divine,
quant' elle son dal centro più remote.
- 52 Onde, se il mio disio dee aver fine
in questo miro ed angelico templo,
che solo amore e luce ha per confine,
- 55 Udir conviemmi ancor come l' esempio
e l' esemplare non vanno d' un modo;
chè io per me indarno ciò contemplo.'
- 58 'Se li tuoi diti non sono a tal nodo
sufficienti, non è maraviglia,
tanto per non tentare è fatto sodo.'
- 61 Così la Donna mia: poi disse: 'Piglia
quel ch' io ti dicerò, se vuoi saziarti,
ed intorno da esso t' assottiglia.
- 64 Li cerchi corporai sono ampi ed arti,
secondo il più e il men della virtute,
che si distende per tutte lor parti.
- 67 Maggior bontà vuol far maggior salute;
maggior salute maggior corpo cape,
s' egli ha le parti egualmente compiute.
- 70 Dunque costui, che tutto quanto rape
l' altro universo seco, corrisponde
al cerchio che più ama e che più sape.
- 73 Perchè, se tu alla virtù circonda
la tua misura, non alla parvenza
delle sustanzie che t' appaion tonde,

- 37 And shone that flame with clearest plenitude
from the Pure Spark at shortest interval,
I think because more with its truth imbued.
- 40 Perceiving me become the anxious thrall
of dubitance, my Lady spoke this word:
'From that one Point hang Heaven and nature all.
- 43 Look at that circle which doth next engird
the Point, and know it has such eager haste
for the enkindled love whereby 'tis spurred.'
- 46 But I made question: 'If the world were based
upon the order yonder wheels disclose,
enough were what has been before me placed;
- 49 But in the world of sense one sees and knows
the orbits to be ever more divine
the more their distance from the centre grows.
- 52 Whence wouldst thou still the longing that is mine,
within the wonderful angelic fane
which light and love and these alone confine,
- 55 I need to hear thee furthermore explain
why copy is not here with pattern vying,
since I unaided gaze thereon in vain.'
- 58 'Suffice not thy own fingers for untying
such knot, there is no wonder, seeing it
so tangled has become for want of trying.'
- 61 My Lady thus; and then: 'Take what seems fit
for me to tell, wouldst thou be satisfied,
and going round it sharpen thou thy wit.
- 64 The spheres corporeal are strait or wide
according to the virtue less or more
which throughout all their regions is supplied.
- 67 Superior good wills weal superior,
and if like perfect organs it dispose,
holds larger body weal in larger store.
- 70 Therefore this sphere which carries as it goes
all the universe beside, must correspond
to that small circle which most loves and knows.
- 73 Hence if thou seek to measure with thy wand,
not the appearance, but the excellence
of substances which to thine eye seem round,

- 76 Tu vederai mirabil conseguenza,
di maggio a più, e di minore a meno,
in ciascun cielo a sua intelligenza.'
- 79 Come rimane splendido e sereno
l'emisperio dell'aer, quando soffia
Borea da quella guancia ond'è più leno,
- 82 Perchè si purga e risolve la roffia
che pria turbava, sì che il ciel ne ride
con le bellezze d'ogni sua parroffia;
- 85 Così fec' io, poi che mi provvide
la Donna mia del suo risponder chiaro,
e come stella in cielo il ver si vide.
- 88 E poi che le parole sue restaro,
non altrimenti ferro disfavilla
che bolle, come i cerchi sfavillaro.
- 91 Lo incendio lor seguiva ogni scintilla;
ed eran tante, che il numero loro
più che il doppiar degli scacchi s'immilla.
- 94 Io sentiva osannar di coro in coro
al punto fisso che li tiene all'*ubi*,
e terrà sempre, nel qual sempre foro;
- 97 E quella, che vedeva i pensier dubi
nella mia mente, disse: 'I cerchi primi
t'hanno mostrati i Serafi e i Cherubi.
- 100 Così veloci seguono i suoi vimi,
per simigliarsi al punto quanto ponno,
e posson quanto a veder son sublimi.
- 103 Quegli altri amor che intorno a lor vonno,
si chiaman Troni del divino aspetto,
perchè il primo ternaro terminonno.
- 106 E dei saper che tutti hanno diletto,
quanto la sua veduta si profonda
nel vero in che si queta ogn' intelletto.
- 109 Quinci si può veder come si fonda
l'esser beato nell'atto che vede,
non in quel ch'ama, che poscia seconda;
- 112 E del vedere è misura mercede,
che grazia partorisce e buona voglia;
così di grado in grado si procede.

- 76 Of more with greater, wondrous congruence,
as of the less with lesser, wilt thou seek
in every heaven, with its Intelligence.'
- 79 Then as remains serene and cleared of reek
the hemisphere of air, soon as the blast
is puffed by Boreas from the gentler cheek,
- 82 Whereby the cloudy rack that overcast
the welkin is dissolving, and the blue
of heaven in all its beauty smiles at last,
- 85 So cleared was I of all confusion through
the lucid answer that my Lady made,
and like a star in heaven appeared the true.
- 88 Thereon, when her discourse to me was stayed,
as iron rays forth sparkles under stress
of fire, such sparkles now the circles rayed.
- 91 Each spark did with their blazing coalesce,
and running into millions manifold
more than the duplication of the chess.
- 94 From quire to quire I heard Hosanna rolled
to the fixed Point which holds them to the *Where*
from evermore, and will for ever hold.
- 97 And she, of my perplexity aware,
said: 'The first gyres enlighten thee concerning
the Seraphim and Cherubim, who fare
- 00 After their bonds so swiftly, because yearning
to grow as like the Point as most they may,—
and so they may, exalting their discerning.
- 03 Those other loves that whirling round them play
are Thrones, wherein God's grace is manifest,
for that the primal triad ended they.
- 06 And thou must know that one and all are blest
according as they penetrate the true,
wherein all understanding is at rest.
- 09 Herein perceive we how the act of view
is source wherefrom beatitude draws being,
not act of love thereafter to ensue;
- 12 And merit is the measure of this seeing,—
merit begot by Grace and right endeavour:
such are the steps progressively agreeing.

- 115 L' altro ternaro, che così germoglia
in questa primavera sempiterna,
che notturno Ariete non dispoglia,
118 Perpetualmente *Osanna* sverna
con tre melode, che suonano in tree
ordini di letizia onde s' interna.
121 In essa gerarchia son le tre Dee,
prima Dominazioni, e poi Virtudi;
l' ordine terzo di Podestadi ee.
124 Poscia nei due penultimi tripudi
Principati ed Arcangeli si girano;
l' ultimo è tutto d' Angelici ludi.
127 Questi ordini di su tutti rimirano,
e di giù vincon sì che verso Dio
tutti tirati sono e tutti tirano.
130 E Dionisio con tanto disio
a contemplar questi ordini si mise,
che li nomò e distinse com' io.
133 Ma Gregorio da lui poi si divise;
onde sì tosto come l' occhio aperse
in questo ciel, di sè medesmo rise.
136 E se tanto segreto ver proferse
mortale in terra, non voglio ch' ammiri;
chè chi il vide quassù gliel discoperse
139 Con altro assai del ver di questi giri.'

- 115 The second triad, burgeoning for ever
to flower in this sempiternal spring
which the nocturnal Ram doth ravage never,
118 Is here perpetually carolling
Hosanna, sounded with three melodies
whence orders three with trinal rapture ring.
121 This priesthood musters three divinities:
the Dominations first, the Virtues then,
and third the order of the Potencies.
124 Next, all but ultimate, in dances twain,
are Princedoms and Archangels wheeling on;
rejoicing Angels last in sportive train.
127 Upward are gazing all these orders yon,
and down prevail so that to the divine
they all are drawing as they all are drawn.
130 Such zeal to contemplate these orders nine
showed Dionysius, that coincided
his definitions and his names with mine.
133 Thereafter Gregory from him divided;
wherefore that saint, first opening his eye
within this Heaven, himself with smiles derided.
136 And that on earth a mortal might descry
such inward truth, need not astonish you,
since learned from him who saw it here on high,
139 With much more of these circles that is true.'

NOTES

We have now reached the outermost and swiftest of the nine moving spheres which were supposed to circle daily round Earth as a centre. This so-called Crystalline sphere had been invented to account for the apparent 'trepidation of the equinoxes'. Some theorists imagined a tenth sphere, called *Primum Mobile*:

'The pass the planets seven, and pass the fixt,
And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
The trepidation talk'd, and that first mov'd.'

(*Paradise Lost*, Book III, ll. 481-3.)

But Dante identifies the Crystalline sphere with 'that which first moved' and to which, as we have seen, most important virtues and influences were attributed. It is evident that he considered this heaven as neither spatial nor material:

'And in this heaven there is no other Where than in the Mind Divine.' (*Canto xxvii*, ll. 109-10.)

Combining this with his further statement that this 'inverted bowl' contains the roots of time, we are confronted with something that might be considered an anticipation of Einstein's theory of time-space. Here, too, the observer gets a lesson in relativity, for here the swiftest movement is that of the inner ring nearest to the mystic central Point, while all the others move slower as they are more distant from the centre.

Beyond this Ninth sphere and enveloping the whole system of the universe there is the mysterious *Empyrean*, home of the Divinity, containing the 'many mansions' of the blessed.

ll. 1-18. It is in the eyes of Beatrice that the Poet first catches sight of the luminous spaceless Point—mystic symbol of the Deity—just as in her eyes he had found the revelation of the double nature of Christ. Cf. *Purgatorio* xxxi. 118-26. The image of the mirror in both cases seems to direct attention to the correspondence of the passages. Readers who find my notes to this Canto insufficient are referred to the succinct 'argument' in Professor Grandgent's admirable edition as well as to his 'Preliminary Note' to the *Paradiso*.

l. 22. The first circle is about as far from the luminous Point as is the halo from the star which projects it upon dense mist. The very indeterminateness of the comparison gives it truth to our experience of such phenomena. Cf. *Canto x*, ll. 67-9.

ll. 25 ff. The nine orders of Angels.

l. 32. Though the rainbow were a complete circle. Juno's herald is Iris, identified with the rainbow. Cf. xxxiii. 118.

ll. 46 ff. The Poet's scientific notion of space (and therefore of time) seems here upset and reversed.

l. 56. Apparently the sensible universe reverses the pattern.

ll. 64 ff. The larger corporeal circles are more excellent; in the world now suddenly revealed the order is reversed, so that the sphere 'that first moved' corresponds to the inner circle of Intelligences.

l. 81. Referring to pictures of the winds on old maps (cf. Shakespeare: 'Blow winds and crack your cheeks').

ll. 91-3. The squares of the board reduplicated by arithmetical progression. In line 93 the rhyme word is *s'immilla*, from *mille*, thousand. Dante creates several such words which can be reproduced in our less fluid idiom only by paraphrase. The ancient story is that the inventor of the game of chess, offered by the king his choice of a reward, claimed only a grain of wheat for the first square, two for the second, and so on, doubling to the sixty-fourth. The king thought it a small request, but not all the acreage of the kingdom could furnish so much grain.

l. 100. The 'bonds' are those of love, attracting them to nearness to God. A sublime theory of gravitation in the spiritual world!

ll. 109-11. Love flows from knowledge.

l. 117. The constellation Aries appears in our sky at the time of the falling leaf.

ll. 130 ff. Dionysius learned the truth from St. Paul, so that he, rather than St. Gregory, is the trustworthy authority concerning the constitution of the kingdom of Heaven—the only world that is real and eternal and that deeply matters. Can it surprise any one that the Poet, believing thus, should devote two of his hundred Cantos to the celestial Intelligences?

These lines constitute a virtual disavowal of the statement in the *Convivio*, Book II, chapter vi. There the Thrones are the first of the final triad (or third from the bottom) where are the Principalities stand. In *Par.* ix. 61, Cunizza makes somewhat obscure reference to the Thrones, a reference in which some find a trace of Dante's earlier opinion.

CANTO VENTESIMONONO

- 1 Quando ambedue i figli di Latona,
coperti del Montone e della Libra,
fanno dell' orizzonte insieme zona,
4 Quant' è dal punto che il zenit inlibra,
infìn che l' uno e l' altro da quel cinto,
cambiando l' emisperio, si dilibra,
7 Tanto, col volto di riso dipinto,
si tacque Beatrice, riguardando
fisso nel punto che m' aveva vinto:
10 Poi cominciò: 'Io dico, non domando
quel che tu vuoi udir, perch' io l' ho visto
dove s' appunta ogni *ubi* ed ogni *quando*.
13 Non per avere a sè di bene acquisto,
ch'esser non può, ma perchè suo splendore
potesse risplendendo dir: *Subsisto*;
16 In sua eternità di tempo fuore,
fuor d' ogni altro comprender, come i piacque,
s' aperse in nuovi amor l' eterno amore.
19 Nè prima quasi torpente si giacque;
chè nè prima nè poscia procedette
lo discorrer di Dio sopra quest' acque.
22 Forma e materia congiunte e purette
uscìro ad esser che non avea fallo,
come d' arco tricolore tre saette;
25 E come in vetro, in ambra od in cristallo
raggio risplende sì che dal venire
all' esser tutto non è intervallo;
28 Così il triforme effetto del suo Sire
nell' esser suo raggiò insieme tutto,
senza distinzion nell' esordire.
31 Concreato fu ordine e costruito
alle sustanzie, e quelle furon cima
nel mondo in che puro atto fu prodotto.
34 Pura potenza tenne la parte ima;
nel mezzo strinse potenza con atto
tal vime, che giammai non si divima.

CANTO XXIX

Creation and Nature of Heavenly Intelligence

- 1 When, by the Ram and by the scales o'erbrooded,
the twin-born children of Latona fair
in one horizon girdle are included,
- 4 Long as the zenith balances them there
until both swerve from that circumference
unbalancing and shifting hemisphere,
- 7 So long, with smiles lighting her countenance,
paused Beatrice, concentrating her ken
upon the Point that had subdued my glance.
- 10 'I tell and do not ask,' began she then,
'what thou wouldst hear; by vision I assist
where centres every *where* and every *when*.
- 13 Not to possess Himself of good acquist,
which cannot be, but in the splendour of
His glorious declaration, "I exist",
- 16 Beyond all limits, and all time above,
as pleased Him, in His own eternity,
unfolded in new loves the Eternal Love.
- 19 Nor yet before as if inert lay He,
since nor before nor after moved the flow
of spirit divine to brood upon that sea.
- 22 Matter and form, combined and simple, so
came into being flawless and unblighted,
like arrows three from triple-corded bow;
- 25 And as glass, amber, crystal may be lighted
so that between the earliest radiation
and full effulgence all remains united,
- 28 Even so the Father's threefold operation
all at a flash its being consummated
without an interval in the creation.
- 31 Order was constituted and created
in substances; the universe was crowned
with these, wherein pure act was generated.
- 34 Pure potentiality held lowest ground;
midway did act and potence interweave
such withies as can never be unbound.

- 37 Jeronimo vi scrisse lungo tratto
di secoli degli Angeli creati
anzi che l' altro mondo fosse fatto;
40 Ma questo vero è scritto in molti lati
dagli scrittor dello Spirito Santo;
e tu ten' avvedrai, se bene agguati;
43 Ed anche la ragione il vede alquanto,
che non concederebbe che i motori
senza sua perfezion fosser cotanto.
46 Or sai tu dove e quando questi amori
furon creati, e come; sì che spenti
nel tuo disio già sono tre ardori.
49 Nè giugneriesi numerando al venti
sì tosto, come degli Angeli parte
turbò il soggetto dei vostri elementi.
52 L' altra rimase, e cominciò quest' arte
che tu discerni, con tanto diletto
che mai da circuir non si diparte.
55 Principio del cader fu il maledetto
superbir di colui, che tu vedesti
da tutti i pesi del mondo costretto.
58 Quelli che vedi qui furon modesti
a riconoscer sè dalla bontate,
che gli avea fatti a tanto intender presti;
61 Perchè le viste lor furo esaltate
con grazia illuminante, e con lor merto,
sì ch' hanno piena e ferma voluntate.
64 E non voglio che dubbi ma sie certo,
che ricever la grazia è meritorio,
secondo che l' affetto gli è aperto.
67 Omai dintorno a questo consistorio
puoi contemplare assai, se le parole
mie son ricolte, senz' altro aiutorio.
70 Ma perchè in terra per le vostre scuole
si legge che l' angelica natura
è tal che intende e si ricorda e vuole,
73 Ancor dirò, perchè tu veggi pura
la verità che laggiù si confonde,
equivocando in sì fatta lettura.

- 3 Jerome wrote to you that we must believe
the angels to have been created ages
before the other world; thou mayst perceive,
40 However, if thou but peruse the sages
through whom the Spirit spoke in Holy Writ,
the very truth displayed on many pages;
43 And also reason gets a glimpse of it,
which that Prime Movers for so long could be
without their perfect work, could not admit.
46 Now where these loves were formed is known to thee,
and when and how; and in thy longing hence
already are extinguished ardours three.
49 Ere they reach twenty who to count commence,
so quickly of the angel host a part
disturbed the lowest of your elements.
52 The rest, who stayed, began to ply this art
which thou beholdest,—so beatified
that never from their circling they depart.
55 The Fall originated in the pride
accursèd of that One whom thou hast seen
crushed by the weights of all the world beside.
58 Those thou beholdest here have humble been
to acknowledge them as from that Goodness kind
which made them apt for knowledge so serene;
61 Wherefore illuminative Grace combined
with their own merit to exalt their view
so that they have a full and steadfast mind.
64 I would not have thee doubt, but hold it true
that grace accepted thus is merited
by laying open the longing heart thereto.
67 Henceforth, if thou my words hast harvested,
canst round this Sacred College take thy fill
of contemplation without further aid.
70 But since on earth your schools attribute still
to the angelic nature, memory
together with intelligence and will,
73 I will speak further to make clear to thee
the truth, confused by men below who indite
prelections fraught with ambiguity.

- 76 Queste sustanzie, poichè fur gioconde
della faccia di Dio, non volser viso
da essa da cui nulla si nasconde:
- 79 Però non hanno vedere interciso
da nuovo obbietto, e però non bisogna
rimemorar per concetto diviso.
- 82 Sì che laggiù non dormendo si sogna,
credendo e non credendo dicer vero;
ma nell' uno è più colpa e più vergogna.
- 85 Voi non andate giù per un sentiero
filosofando; tanto vi trasporta
l' amor dell' apparenza e il suo pensiero.
- 88 Ed ancor questo quassù si comporta
con men disdegno, che quando è posposta
la divina scrittura, o quando è torta.
- 91 Non vi si pensa quanto sangue costa
seminarla nel mondo, e quanto piace
chi umilmente con essa s' accosta.
- 94 Per apparer ciascun s' ingegna, e face
sue invenzioni, e quelle son trascorse
dai predicanti, e il Vangelio si tace.
- 97 Un dice che la luna si ritorse
nella passion di CRISTO, e s' interpose,
per che il lume del sol giù non si porse;
- 100 E mente, chè la luce si nascose
da sè; però agl' Ispani ed agl' Indi,
com' a' Giudei, tale eclissi rispose.
- 103 Non ha Fiorenza tanti Lapi e Bindi,
quante sì fatte favole per anno
in pergamo si gridan quinci e quindi;
- 106 Sì che le pecorelle, che non sanno,
tornan dal pasco pasciute di vento,
e non le scusa non veder lor danno.
- 109 Non disse CRISTO al suo primo convento:
"Andate, e predicate al mondo ciance,"
ma diede lor verace fondamento;
- 112 E quel tanto sonò nelle sue guance,
sì ch' a pugar, per accender la fede,
dell' Evangelio fero scudo e lance.

- 76 These substances, since first they drew delight
from God's own face, wherefrom is hidden naught,
have never turned away from it their sight;
79 Whence they have vision intercepted not
by concept new, and need not undertake
to call back memory through divided thought.
82 So men down there are dreaming, wide awake,
weening, or weening not, truth to declare;
but in the one more guilt and shame partake.
85 Below ye travel not one thoroughfare
philosophizing; so far does the love
of show delude you, and its specious air.
88 Yet even enduring this, the Heavens above
are less indignant, than when set aside
is Holy Writ or idly prated of.
91 What blood was spent to sow it far and wide
is given no heed, nor how their prayer is heard
who in humility by it abide.
94 Each is agog to shine, and ply absurd
inventions, and these form the staple theme
of preachers,—of the Gospel not a word!
97 During Christ's passion, some would have us deem
the moon turned back again and cancelled through
the intercepted sunlight; and some dream
00 That of its own accord the light withdrew,
and hence would this eclipse alike appear
to Spaniard and to Indian, as to Jew.
03 So many a Lapo and Bindo every year
breeds Florence not, as fables of this kind
are bawled out from the pulpit, far and near;
06 So that from pasture, flatulent with wind,
the silly sheep flock, witless of salvation;
yet is it no excuse that they are blind.
09 Christ did not say to his first congregation:
"Preach to the world with idle utterance,"
but laid for their behoof the true foundation;
12 And that had from their lips such resonance,
that, to enkindle faith, their battle quest,
the Gospel formed their buckler and their lance.

- 115 Ora si va con motti e con iscede
a predicare, e pur che ben si rida,
gonfia il cappuccio, e più non si richiede.
- 118 Ma tale uccel nel becchetto s' annida,
che se il vulgo il vedesse, vederebbe
la perdonanza di che si confida;
- 121 Per cui tanta stoltizia in terra crebbe,
che senza prova d' alcun testimonio
ad ogni promission si converrebbe.
- 124 Di questo ingrassa il porco sant' Antonio,
ed altri ancor che son assai più porci,
pagando di moneta senza conio.
- 127 Ma perchè siam digressi assai, ritorci
gli occhi oramai verso la dritta strada,
sì che la via col tempo si raccorci.
- 130 Questa natura sì oltre s' ingrada
in numero, che mai non fu loquela
nè concetto mortal che tanto vada.
- 133 E se tu guardi quel che si rivela
per Daniel, vedrai che in sue migliaia
determinato numero si cела.
- 136 La prima luce che tutta la raia,
per tanti modi in essa si recepe,
quanti son gli splendori a che s' appaia.
- 139 Onde, perocchè all' atto che concepe
segue l' affetto, d' amor la dolcezza
diversamente in essa ferve e tepe.
- 142 Vedi l' eccelso omai, e la larghezza
dell' eterno valor, poscia che tanti
speculi fatti s' ha in che si spezza,
- 145 Uno manendo in sè come davanti.'

- 115 Now preachers sally forth to break a jest,
buffoons who, so they may provoke a grin,
puff out their cowls and reck not of the rest;
118 But could the people see what bird of sin
is nestling in the hood-tail, they would guess
what kind of pardon they are trusting in;
121 Whence in the world so waxeth foolishness
that, seeking not approof of any sign,
men jump at promise of indulgences.
124 Hereby St. Anthony makes fat his swine,
and others also, far more swine than they,
paying their scot with counterfeited coin.
127 But since we have gone very far astray,
let us look back to the straight thoroughfare,
so with the time to shorten up the way.
130 The angelic nature runs up such a stair
of number, scaling so remote a height,
never could tongue or thought pursue it there.
133 And Daniel's revelation, read aright,
shows, in the thousands he enumerates,
that definite number is withheld from sight.
136 The Primal Light, which all irradiates,
by modes as many is received in these
as are the splendours whereunto it mates.
139 And since love follows on the act that sees,
therefore the sweetness of their love is spoken,
more or less fervent in diverse degrees.
142 Let this the height, henceforth, and breadth betoken
of Worth Eternal, fashioning great store
of mirrors whereupon its light is broken,
145 One in Itself remaining as before.'

NOTES

ll. 1-7. The setting sun and the rising full moon at the equinox—the one under the Ram, the other under the Scales (Libra). The image is one which any one may test by going to a clear look-out point at the right moment and using his eyes. How long do they balance there in the invisible scales hung from the zenith?

l. 13. Why the angels were created.

l. 16. Outside time and space.

ll. 22 ff. Pure form or act is identified with intelligence (angels); matter is the pure potency, passive in character; the combination of form and matter is found in created things, especially in man.

ll. 31-6. These substances at the top of creation are the angels, which are pure act or form (i.e., intelligence). This interbraiding of spirit and matter cannot be severed by death.

ll. 37 ff. The angels, movers of the spheres, could not be conceived as inactive—therefore could not have existed without their proper theatre of action.

l. 49. The rebellious angels fell to earth before one could count twenty.

ll. 57. Cf. *Inferno* xxxii. 3.

ll. 71 ff. Memory cannot be predicated of beings outside of time and space, who never forget.

l. 79. They do not 'look before and after and sigh for what is not'.

l. 85. The stormy voice again—unmistakably the voice of Dante rather than of gentle Beatrice.

ll. 97 ff. Concerning the extent of the darkening from the sixth to the ninth hour (i.e., from noon until three) the *Vulgate* is more positive than the ordinary English versions: instead of 'over all the land' the words are 'super universam terram' (Matthew), 'per totam terram' (Mark), 'in universam terram' (Luke). 'Over the whole earth,' reads Challoner's version of St. Matthew. Dante took these words to mean what they say. As a good astronomer, he knew that a mere natural eclipse caused by the interposition of the moon would not cause darkness over the whole earth. Reason therefore co-operated with faith to make him reject rationalizing explanations of an event that he regarded as supernatural of origin. Moreover he held that pseudo-scientific or philosophical speculations are out of place in the pulpit which, in an age when ability to read was

confined to the few, was much more than at present a place of religious exposition.

ll. 100ff2. The translation follows the reading of the third edition of the Oxford text, and differs sharply from that of the fourth edition, which is, however, here retained. The latter represents the Poet as flatly giving the lie to those who assert the retrocession of the moon, and asserting that the light withdrew of itself, because the light was eclipsed for the nations at the ends of the earth (Indians in the extreme east, Spaniards in the extreme west) as well as for the Jews in the middle. The later reading doubtless has the support of the majority of the codices, but it seems to some improbable that Dante would have used the ugly word 'lie' of such authorities as St. Jerome, Thomas Aquinas, and Dionisius.

l. 103. Common nicknames in Florence: 'Lapo' corresponds to 'Jake' (Jacopo) (cf. xiii. 139).

l. 118. A devil lurks in the tail of the monk's hood like a black bird close at the ear of the speaker and, doubtless, inspiring the sermon. One thinks of Milton's Satan

'. . . found

Squat like a toad close at the ear of Eve.'

Chaucer makes his shameless 'pardoner' give a frankly cynical description of his methods of hoodwinking the ignorant in the name of religion. (Prologue to 'Pardoner's Tale.')

l. 124. St. Anthony put the hog under his feet as a symbol of his conquest of the sensual cravings of the body; but, as is almost universally the case, the symbol was regarded as itself sacred, until for long ages the 'tantony pigs', as they were called in England, roamed about medieval cities at will, fed by the pious, exactly as the sacred bulls roam the streets of Hindustan. In return for this free entertainment of their herds, as well as for the fat proceeds of their shameless begging, the monks of St. Anthony gave false indulgences. Dante more than intimates that the monks and their minions were more swinish than their pigs. The reader may be amused by consulting Boccaccio's *Decameron*, VI. 10.

ll. 130 ff. Number of the angels countless. The numbers mentioned in Daniel vii. 10, are manifestly indefinite.

l. 142 to end. The Eternal Worth (*Eterno Valore*) remains one in essence, although reflected with infinite diversity in those wonderfully individualized angelic creatures. Converse with them would afford as perpetual a variety of interest as is afforded here to the student of nature.

CANTO TRENTESIMO

- 1 Forse sei milia miglia di lontano
ci ferve l' ora sesta, e questo mondo
china già l' ombra quasi al letto piano,
4 Quando il mezzo del cielo a noi profondo
comincia a farsi tal, che alcuna stella
perde il parere infino a questo fondo;
7 E come vien la chiarissima ancella
del sol più oltre, così il ciel si chiude
di vista in vista infino alla più bella;
10 Non altrimenti il trionfo, che lude
sempre dintorno al punto che mi vinse,
parendo inchiuso da quel ch' egl' inchiuide,
13 A poco a poco al mio veder si estinse;
per che tornar con gli occhi a Beatrice
nulla vedere ed amor mi costrinse.
16 Se quanto infino a qui di lei si dice
fosse conchiuso tutto in una loda,
poco sarebbe a fornir questa vice.
19 La bellezza ch' io vidi si trasmoda
non pur di là da noi, ma certo io credo
che solo il suo fattor tutta la goda.
22 Da questo passo vinto mi concedo,
più che giammai da punto di suo tema
soprato fosse comico o tragedo.
25 Chè, come sole in viso che più trema,
così lo rimembrar del dolce riso
la mente mia di sè medesima scema.
28 Dal primo giorno ch' io vidi il suo viso
in questa vita, infino a questa vista,
non m' è il seguire al mio cantar preciso;
31 Ma or convien che mio seguir desista
più dietro a sua bellezza poetando,
come all' ultimo suo ciascuno artista.
34 Cotal, qual io la lascio a maggior bando
che quel della mia tuba, che deduce
l' ardua sua materia terminando,

CANTO XXX
The Celestial Rose

- 1 When, eastward ho! six thousand miles perchance
noon blazes, and toward the level bed
the shadow of this world already slants,
4 The deep of central heaven above our head
grows so suffused that here a star and yon
begins to pale the radiance it shed,
7 And, as the brightest handmaid of the sun
advances, so are quenched the heavenly graces
star after star, even to the fairest one.
10 Not else the Triumph that for ever races
around the Point which overcame me quite,
seeming embraced by that which it embraces,
13 Was imperceptibly immersed in light;
whereat to turn mine eyes on Beatrice,
love laid constraint on me, and lack of sight.
16 Could what is said of her as far as this
all in one single act of praise conclude,
it would but serve the present turn amiss.
19 The beauty that I saw doth so elude
our measure, that its Maker, I surely deem,
alone can taste its full beatitude.
22 I yield me vanquished at this pass supreme;
comic or tragic poet overborne
was never thus by crisis of his theme.
25 For, as to dazzled sight the sun of morn,
so doth her sweet remembered smile erase
my memory, of its very self forlorn.
28 From the first day when I beheld her face
in this life, even until the present viewing,
my song yet never faltered on her trace;
31 But now I must give over from pursuing
her beauty in these cadences of mine,
like every artist tasked beyond his doing.
34 Such as I leave her to a more divine
renown than any that my trumpet grants,—
which now concludes its arduous design,—

- 37 Con atto e voce d'espedito duce
ricominciò: 'Noi semo usciti fuore
del maggior corpo al ciel ch' è pura luce;
40 Luce intellettual piena d'amore,
amor di vero ben pien di letizia,
letizia che trascende ogni dolzore.
43 Qui vederai l' una e l' altra milizia
di Paradiso, e l' una in quegli aspetti
che tu vedrai all' ultima giustizia.'
46 Come subito lampo che discetti
gli spiriti visivi, sì che priva
dell' atto l' occhio di più forti obbietti;
49 Così mi circonfulse luce viva,
e lasciommi fasciato di tal velo
del suo fulgor, che nulla m'appariva.
52 'Sempre l' amor che queta questo cielo,
accoglie in sè con sì fatta salute,
per far disposto a sua fiamma il candelò.'
55 Non fur più tosto dentro a me venute
queste parole brevi, ch' io compresi
me sormontar di sopra a mia virtute;
58 E di novella vista mi raccesi
tale che nulla luce è tanto mera,
che gli occhi miei non si fosser difesi.
61 E vidi lume in forma di riviera
fulvido di fulgore, intra due rive
dipinte di mirabil primavera.
64 Di tal fumana uscian faville vive,
e d' ogni parte si mettean nei fiori,
quasi rubin che oro circonscrive.
67 Poi come inebriate dagli odori,
riprofondavan sè nel miro gurge,
e s' una entrava, un' altra n' usciva fuori.
70 'L' alto disio che mo t' infiamma ed urge
d' aver notizia di ciò che tu vei,
tanto mi piace più, quanto più turge.
73 Ma di quest' acqua convien che tu bei,
prima che tanta sete in te si sazii:'
così mi disse il sol degli occhi miei.

- 37 She said, with leader's voice and vigilance:
 'Quitting the body most immense and fleet,
 we reach the heaven that is pure radiance:
40 Radiance of intellect with love replete,
 love of true good replete with ecstasy,
 ecstasy far exceeding every sweet.
43 Here both the one and the other soldiery
 of Paradise, and one host of the two
 robed as at Final Judgement, shalt thou see.'
46 As when a sudden lightning routs the crew
 of visual spirits, putting them to flight
 so that the clearest things are cancelled through,
49 So beamed there all about me living light,
 leaving so thick a veil around me closing,
 that I saw nothing for that glory bright.
52 'The Love wherein this heaven is aye reposing
 is wonted so to welcome those who come,
 duly the taper for its flame disposing.'
55 No sooner had this brief exordium
 within me penetrated, than I knew
 myself upraised beyond my masterdom;
58 And I rekindled with new power of view
 such that no light could be so unalloyed
 but that mine eyes were tempered thereunto.
61 And I saw light in river-form with tide
 of fulgent fire between two margins streaming,
 which wondrously with flowers of spring were dyed.
64 Out of that current living sparks were teeming
 and flashing from the flowers with hues intense
 like very rubies from gold patines gleaming.
67 Thereon, appearing drunken with the scents,
 they plunged again into the wondrous eddy,
 and as one sank another issued thence.
70 'The lofty wish aflame in thee already
 for knowledge of this vision, in like wise
 extends my joy as its increase is steady;
73 But thou must of this water of Paradise
 drink deep, to slake a thirst that so consumes.'
 Thus spoke to me the sunshine of mine eyes,

- 76 Anco soggiunse: 'Il fiume, e li topazii
ch' entrano ed escono, e il rider dell' erbe
son di lor vero ombriferi prefazii;
79 Non che da sè sien queste cose acerbe:
ma è difetto dalla parte tua,
che non hai viste ancor tanto superbe.'
82 Non è fantin che sì subito rua
col volto verso il latte, se si svegli
molto tardato dall' usanza sua,
85 Come fec' io, per far migliori spegli
ancor degli occhi, chinandomi all' onda
che si deriva perchè vi s' immegli.
88 E sì come di lei bevve la gronda
delle palpebre mie, così mi parve
di sua lunghezza divenuta tonda.
91 Poi come gente stata sotto larve,
che pare altro che prima, se si sveste
la sembianza non sua in che disparve;
94 Così mi si cambiaro in maggior feste
li fiori e le faville, sì ch' io vidi
ambo le corti del ciel manifeste.
97 O isplendor di Dio, per cu' io vidi
l' alto trionfo del regno verace,
dammi virtù a dir com' io lo vidi.
100 Lume è lassù, che visibile face
lo Creatore a quella creatura,
che solo in lui vedere ha la sua pace;
103 E si distende in circular figura
in tanto, che la sua circonferenza
sarebbe al sol troppo larga cintura.
106 Fassi di raggio tutta sua parvenza
riflesso al sommo del Mobile primo,
che prende quindi vivere e potenza.
109 E come clivo in acqua di suo imo
si specchia, quasi per vedersi adorno,
quando è nel verde e nei fioretti opimo,
112 Sì sosprastando al lume intorno intorno
vidi specchiarsi in più di mille soglie,
quanto di noi lassù fatto ha ritorno.

- 76 Adding: 'The river and the smiling blooms,
the plunging and emerging jewels bright,
are types of truth that in their shadow looms;
79 Not that these things are hard to see aright,
but on thy part there is inaptitude
since not yet so exalted is thy sight.'
- 82 There is no child far later than it should
awakening, with face toward the breast
that plunges with more hunger-stricken mood,
85 Than did I, that mine eyes might mirror best
that vision, bending me my fill to take
out of that flood which pours to make us blest.
- 88 No sooner had I felt its ripple slake
mine eyelids, than both margins seemed to yield
from long to large and rounded to a lake.
- 91 Then, even as masqueraders are revealed
quite other than beforehand, letting fall
the alien guise wherein they were concealed,
94 So changed for me to ampler festival
the flowerets and the flashes, till I saw
clearly the two Courts of the heavenly Hall.
- 97 O splendour of very God, whereby I saw
the Kingdom true in triumph high, increase
in me the power to tell it as I saw!
- 100 A light up yonder shows without surcease
the Maker to that creature, who alone
in seeing Him inherits its own peace;
- 103 And this light broadens in a circling zone
so far and wide that its circumference
would be too large a girdle for the sun.
- 106 Its semblance, all of radiant effluence,
doth to the top of Primal Motion pass,
which takes vitality and vigour thence.
- 109 And as a hillside makes a looking-glass
of water at its foot, as if discerning
how fair and rich it is in flowers and grass,
- 112 So mirrored, round and round above the burning
on myriads of thrones, beheld I those
of us who there above have won returning.

- 115 E se l' infimo grado in sè raccoglie
sì grande lume, quant' è la larghezza
di questa rosa nell' estreme foglie?
- 118 La vista mia nell' ampio e nell' altezza
non si smarriva, ma tutto prendeva
il quanto e il quale di quella allegrezza.
- 121 Presso e lontano lì nè pon nè leva,
chè dove Dio senza mezzo governa,
la legge natural nulla rileva.
- 124 Nel giallo della rosa sempiterna,
che si dilata, digrada e redole
odor di lode al sol che sempre verna,
- 127 Qual è colui che tace e dicer vuole,
mi trasse Beatrice, e disse: 'Mira
quanto è il convento delle bianche stole!
- 130 Vedi nostra città quanto ella gira!
vedi li nostri scanni sì ripieni,
che poca gente omai ci si disira.
- 133 In quel gran seggio, a che tu gli occhi tieni
per la corona che già v' è su posta,
prima che tu a queste nozze ceni,
- 136 Sederà l' alma, che fia giù agosta,
dell' alto Arrigo, ch' a drizzare Italia
verrà in prima che ella sia disposta.
- 139 La cieca cupidigia che vi ammalia,
simili fatti v' ha al fantolino,
che muor di fame e caccia via la balia;
- 142 E fia prefetto nel foro divino
allora tal, che palese e coperto
non anderà con lui per un cammino.
- 145 Ma poco poi sarà da Dio sofferto
nel santo officio; ch' ei sarà detruso
là dove Simon mago è per suo merto,
- 148 E farà quel d' Anagna entrar più giuso.'

- 115 And if the lowermost degrees inclose
 lustre so large, what amplitude of light
 spread in the outer petals of the Rose!
- 118 My vision in the vastness and the height
 strayed not, at home and fully conversant
 with essence and with scope of that delight.
- 121 There near and far do neither add nor scant,
 for where God is directly governing
 the law of nature is not relevant.
- 124 Into the yellow Rose unwithering,
 whose petals are unfurled with fragrance cast
 of praise unto the Sun of dateless spring,
- 127 Like one long silent, moved to speak at last,
 did Beatrice conduct me, saying: 'View
 the Congregation of white robes, how vast!
- 130 Look the wide circuit of our city through!
 look at our benches which are so replete
 that here henceforward are expected few!
- 133 There where thine eyes are drawn to that great Seat
 by the already overhanging crown,
 ere thou shalt at this wedding supper eat,
- 136 The soul of noble Henry shall sit down,
 who comes, august, to render straight the way
 for Italy, ere she be ready grown.
- 139 Blind Greed, who doth her spell upon you lay,
 has made you like the child who, though he pine
 with hunger, pushes yet the nurse away.
- 142 Then shall be Pontiff in the Court Divine
 one such that open word and covert deed
 walk not on equal feet to one design.
- 145 But little while will God permit him speed
 in Holy Office, for he shall be thrust
 with Simon Magus, and make, by way of meed,
- 148 Him of Alagna bite the baser dust.'

NOTES

ll. 1-9. According to Dante's conception the globe of earth was considerably smaller than it really is, so that when the sun is in the zenith at a point about six thousand miles east of us it will not yet have risen where we are. As the brightest hand-maid of the sun, Aurora, approaches our place of observation, the stars rapidly grow dimmer and dimmer until even the brilliant morning star is shut from sight. Meanwhile the vast conical shadow of earth will be sinking as the sun rises until, at a given moment, sun and shadow will balance each other on the plane of the horizon, just as in the picture at the beginning of the preceding Canto the rising full moon is balanced against the setting sun. So as Dante soars with Beatrice into the empyrean the angelic circles are quenched in that excess of light. Such is the comparison, at once precise and sublime, which stands as a pylon or stately gateway before this noble concluding series of Cantos.

l. 27. The memory suffers, as Torraca puts it, 'a solution of continuity.' Cf. *xiv.* 81; *xxiii.* 61-3. This may have suggested to Lowell his sad witticism, 'My memory has become a reminiscence of itself.' More and more frequently in these later Cantos the Poet confesses the despair of the artist who endeavours to render by means of conventional signs on paper not only the processes of thought but also all combinations of form and colour, harmonies of sound, and even signals from the great deep of the unconscious. But the marvel is that he contrives to convert the very confession of impotence into a vividly beautiful mode of description.

ll. 40 ff. We enter here upon holy ground, where we must not only put the shoes from off our feet but school the voice to quiet utterance if not to reverent silence. All is beauty and significance; comment seems impertinence if not profanation; as well interrupt a symphony with explanation. In short, these final Cantos are not to be merely read, but to be brooded over, as a painter broods over a landscape in order to realize its appeal to the imagination.

l. 43. The host of the Angels and that of the redeemed.

ll. 52-4. The blinding excess of light prepares the soul for the vision of the Divine radiance. The Poet may have had in mind the case of Saul of Tarsus blinded by revelatory light from Heaven (The Acts, chapter ix).

ll. 64-9. 'Some interchange of grace' between the living sparks of the river of light and the flowers blooming and exhaling fragrance upon the banks.

ll. 76 ff. The stream of grace, the flowers, and the ruby-sparks are but symbols.

l. 82. The tender and familiar image recalls Faust's cry: 'Euch Brüste wo, ihr Quellen alles Lebens!' Cf. the image of the hungry child refusing the breast, l. 140; and that of the child grateful for being fed, Canto xxiii, ll. 121-3.

l. 88. Dante's sight exalted to see the reality behind these symbols.

ll. 95 ff. The identical triple rime upon 'saw' has the same solemnity as that upon 'Christ'. Cf. Hugh Capet's discourse, *Purgatorio* xx. 65-9.

l. 107. Striking upon the outermost surface of the universe it gives motion to all the spheres.

ll. 128 ff. The last words of Beatrice.

l. 132. Dante did not realize, as the thoughtful now do, that

'We are ancients of the earth
And in the morning of the times.'

ll. 142 ff. Clement V, who secretly opposed Henry VII while pretending to favour. He of Alagna is Boniface VIII. The best commentary is *Inferno* xix.

CANTO TRENTESIMOPRIMO

- 1 In forma dunque di candida rosa
mi si mostrava la milizia santa,
che nel suo sangue CRISTO fece sposa;
4 Ma l'altra, che volando vede e canta
la gloria di colui che la innamora,
e la bontà che la fece cotanta,
7 Sì come schiera d'api, che s'infiora
una fiata, ed una si ritorna
là dove suo lavoro s'insapora,
10 Nel gran fior discendeva che s'adorna
di tante foglie, e quindi risaliva
là dove il suo amor sempre soggiorna.
13 Le facce tutte avean di fiamma viva,
e l'ali d'oro, e l'altro tanto bianco,
che nulla neve a quel termine arriva.
16 Quando scendean nel fior, di banco in banco
porgevan della pace e dell'ardore,
ch'egli acquistavan ventilando il fianco.
19 Nè lo interpor si tra il disopra e il fiore
di tanta plenitudine volante
impediva la vista e lo splendore;
22 Chè la luce divina è penetrante
per l'universo secondo ch'è degno,
sì che nulla le puote essere ostante.
25 Questo sicuro e gaudioso regno,
frequente in gente antica ed in novella,
viso ed amore avea tutto ad un segno.
28 O trina luce, che in unica stella
scintillando a lor vista sì gli appaga,
guarda quaggiù alla nostra procella.
31 Se i Barbari, venendo da tal plaga
che ciascun giorno d'Elice si copra,
rotante col suo figlio ond'ell'è vaga,
34 Vedendo Roma e l'ardua sua opra
stupefaciensi, quando Laterano
alle cose mortali andò di sopra;

CANTO XXXI

Beatrice sends St. Bernard to Dante

- 1 In fashion therefore of a pure white Rose
unfolded to my view the sacred throng
whom Christ in His own blood espoused. But those
4 Who witness as they fly, and tell in song
the glory of Him who makes them love, and sing
His excellence who made them fair and strong,—
7 Even as a busy swarm of bees a-wing
that merge in flowers awhile, then speed away
to where their labour sweet is savouring,—
10 Plunged into the Great Flower, with fair array
of Petals, and were reascending thence
where sojourns their own Love for ever and aye.
13 Their features were alive with flame intense,
golden their wings, the rest so white that banks
of drifted snow have not their innocence.
16 Alighting on the Flower, to ranks on ranks
they proffered of the ardour and repose
which they had won by winnowing their flanks.
19 Nor did the coming in, between the Rose
and That which dwelt above, of flight so great
obstruct the vision; still the splendour glows,
22 For through the universe doth penetrate
in measure of its worth the Light Divine
so that no bar can ever separate.
25 This safe and happy Kingdom, where combine
both ancient folk and modern thronging thus,
had look and love all turned unto one sign.
28 O Trinal Light, in one Star luminous,
soothing their vision with such benison,
look down upon the storm that buffets us!
31 If the barbarians from out that zone
where spreads for ever Helicë her span
revolving with her well-belovèd son,—
34 If, entering Rome, her mighty works to scan,
these stared in wonder, in that era when
transcended mortal things the Lateran,—

- 37 Io, che al divino dall' umano,
all' eterno dal tempo era venuto,
e di Fiorenza in popol giusto e sano,
40 Di che stupor dovea esser compiuto!
certo tra esso e il gaudio mi facea
libito non udire, e starmi muto.
43 E quasi peregrin, che si ricrea
nel tempio del suo voto riguardando,
e spera già ridir com' ello stea,
46 Sì per la viva luce passeggiando,
menava io gli occhi per li gradi,
mo su, mo giù, e mo ricirculando.
49 Vedeo di carità visi suadi,
d' altrui lume fregiati e del suo riso,
ed atti ornati di tutte onestadi.
52 La forma general di Paradiso
già tutta mio sguardo avea compresa,
e in nulla parte ancor fermato il viso;
55 E volgeami con voglia riaccesa
per domandar la mia Donna di cose,
di che la mente mia era sospesa.
58 Uno intendeo, ed altro mi rispose;
credea veder Beatrice, e vidi un Sene
vestito con le genti gloriose.
61 Diffuso era per gli occhi e per le gene
di benigna letizia, in atto pio,
quale a tenero padre si conviene.
64 Ed: 'Ella ov' è?' di subito diss' io.
Ond' egli: 'A terminar lo tuo disiro
mosse Beatrice me del loco mio;
67 E se riguardi su nel terzo giro
del sommo grado, tu la rivedrai
nel trono che i suoi merti le sortiro.'
70 Senza risponder gli occhi su levai,
e vidi lei che si facea corona,
riflettendo da sè gli eterni rai.
73 Da quella region che più su tuona,
occhio mortale alcun tanto non dista,
qualunque in mare più giù s' abbandona,

- 37 I, who to the Divine had come from men,
from time unto eternity had come,
from Florence to a people just and sane,
40 With what amazement was I overcome!
truly the wonder and the joy between,
'twas rapture to hear nothing and stand dumb.
- 43 And as the wayworn pilgrim grows serene
gazing around the temple of his vow,
and muses how he shall describe the scene,
46 I, bending on the living light my brow,
followed along the lines, and sought to trace,
now up, now down, and round the circle now.
- 49 I looked on many a love-persuading face
decked with Another's light, and their own eyes
smiling, and action of all noble grace.
- 52 The universal form of Paradise
my glance had gathered as a whole immense,
but did no single part yet signalize;
- 55 And round I turned with will rekindled thence
to ask my Lady what these matters be
concerning which my mind was in suspense.
- 58 One thing I meant, another fronted me:
weening to look again on Beatrice,
a glory-vested Elder did I see.
- 61 His lineaments were overspread with bliss
benignant, kindly was his mien and eye,
betokening a father's love in this.
- 64 'And she,—where is she?' was my sudden cry;
whereat he answered: 'To fulfil thy yearning
Beatrice urged me from my place on high:
- 67 Third from supreme the circle, which discerning,
thou shalt again behold her countenance
shine down from where her worth a throne is earning.
- 70 Without reply I lifted up my glance
and saw her, where a coronal she wore
woven from out the eternal radiance.
- 73 From welkin whence the highest thunders roar
has never mortal eye so distant been,
though sunken deep beneath the ocean-floor,

- 76 Quanto lì da Beatrice la mia vista;
ma nulla mi facea, chè sua effigia
non discendeva a me per mezzo mista.
- 79 'O Donna, in cui la mia speranza vige,
e che soffristi per la mia salute
in Inferno lasciar le tue vestige;
- 82 Di tante cose quante io ho vedute,
dal tuo potere e dalla tua bontate
riconosco la grazia e la virtute.
- 85 Tu m' hai di servo tratto a libertate
per tutte quelle vie, per tutti i modi
che di ciò fare avei la potestate.
- 88 La tua magnificenza in me custodi,
sì che l' anima mia che fatta hai sana,
piacente a te dal corpo si disnodi.'
- 91 Così orai; ed ella sì lontana,
come pareva, sorrise e riguardommi;
poi si tornò all' eterna fontana.
- 94 E il santo Sene: 'Acciocchè tu assommi
perfettamente,' disse, 'il tuo cammino,
a che prego ed amor santo mandommi,
- 97 Vola con gli occhi per questo giardino;
chè veder lui t' acconcerà lo sguardo
più al montar per lo raggio divino.
- 100 E la Regina del cielo, ond' i' ardo
tutto d' amor, ne farà ogni grazia,
perocch' io sono il suo fedel Bernardo.'
- 103 Quale è colui, che forse di Croazia
viene a veder la Veronica nostra,
che per l' antica fama non si sazia,
- 106 Ma dice nel pensier, fin che si mostra:
'Signor mio GESÙ CRISTO, Dio verace,
or fu sì fatta la sembianza vostra?'
- 109 Tale era io mirando la vivace
carità di colui, che in questo mondo,
contemplando, gustò di quella pace.
- 112 'Figliuol di grazia, questo esser giocondo,'
cominciò egli, 'non ti sarà noto
tenendo gli occhi pur quaggiù al fondo;

- 76 As mine from Beatrice; but 't was so keen
no distance mattered, since her features beaming
shone down on me without a blur between.
- 79 'O Lady in whom my living hope is teeming,
and who didst once endure to leave the trace
of thy dear feet in Hell for my redeeming,
- 82 In all the worth and beauty finding place
in things thou hast enabled me to see,
I recognize thy virtue and thy grace.
- 85 Thou leddest me along from slave to free
by all those ways, by all expedients
whereby the power to do so lay in thee.
- 88 Preserve in me thine own magnificence,
so that my spirit, through thy healing, may
content thee as it slips the coil of sense.'
- 91 Far as she seemed, on hearing me so pray,
she smiled and looked: then to the Fountain-head
Eternal turned her shining eyes away.
- 94 'In order,' now the holy Elder said,
'that thou complete thy course,—whence holy love
dispatched me and true orisons have sped,—
- 97 Let thy fleet glances through this garden rove,
for better will such sight thy vision steel
upon the ray divine to mount above.
- 100 And she, the Queen of Heaven, for whom I feel
love's utter flame, will grant us furtherance,
for reason that I am her Bernard leal.'
- 103 Like him who from Croatia, perchance,
comes to see our Veronica, well known
through old report, and cannot sate his glance,
- 106 But thinks within, so long as it be shown,
'My Lord and very God, Christ Jesus mine,
and were these features once Thy very own?'
- 109 Such was I, gazing at that living shrine
of charity, who in the world below
by contemplation tasted peace divine.
- 112 'This blithesome being wilt thou never know,
O son of grace,' such was his further note,
'with eyes but fixed here at the bottom so;

- 115 Ma guarda i cerchi fino al più remoto,
tanto che veggì seder la Regina,
cui questo regno è suddito e devoto.’
- 118 Io levai gli occhi; e come da mattina
la parte oriental dell’orizzonte
soperchia quella dove il sol declina,
- 121 Così, quasi di valle andando a monte
con gli occhi vidi parte nello estremo
vincer di lume tutta l’altra fronte.
- 124 E come quivi, ove s’aspetta il temo
che mal guidò Fetonte, più s’infiama,
e quindi e quindi il lume si fa scemo;
- 127 Così quella pacifica oriafiama
nel mezzo s’avvivava, e d’ogni parte
per egual modo allentava la fiamma.
- 130 Ed a quel mezzo con le penne sparte
vidi più di mille Angeli festanti,
ciascun distinto e di fulgore e d’arte.
- 133 Vidi quivi ai lor giochi ed ai lor canti
ridere una bellezza, che letizia
era negli occhi a tutti gli altri Santi.
- 136 E s’io avessi in dir tanta divizia,
quanto ad immaginar, non ardirei
lo minimo tentar di sua delizia.
- 139 Bernardo, come vide gli occhi miei
nel caldo suo calor fissi ed attenti,
li suoi con tanto affetto volse a lei,
- 142 Che i miei di rimirar fe’ più ardenti.

- 115 But mark the circles to the most remote
until thou shalt the enthronèd Queen descry,
to whom this realm is subject and devote.’
- 118 I raised mine eyes; and as the morning sky
displays a point of the horizon bright
beyond that of the westering sun, so I,
- 121 As going with my glance from vale to height,
beheld a region at the verge extreme
surpassing all the other front in light.
- 124 And as, where we expect the chariot-beam
that Phaëton guided ill, the glows increase,
fading away on either hand, the gleam
- 127 Illumined so that Oriflamme of peace
in the live centre, while on either side
in equal measure did the splendour cease.
- 130 And at that centre I saw, on wing flung wide,
a thousand jocund angels sweep along,
in glow and ministry diversified.
- 133 There, smiling on their games and at their song,
I saw a Beauty that was bliss indwell
the eyes of all the other holy throng.
- 136 Yet were my wealth of diction parallel
with wealth of fancy, rash were the emprise
the least of her delights to strive to tell.
- 139 Then holy Bernard, when he saw mine eyes
fastened upon the object of his yearning,
his own in her did so imparadise
- 142 As to make my desire to look more burning.

NOTES

l. 7. The comparison with the bee was merely suggested in Canto xxx, ll. 64-9.

ll. 16-18. The peace and love acquired by the angels *ventilando il fianco*—i.e., flying on their divine errands—they impart to the assembly of the blest.

l. 32. Helicē was turned into the Great Bear (the Wain or Dipper), her son, Arcas, into the Lesser Bear, which is elsewhere called 'that Horn beginning at the point of the axle round which the first circle goeth', i.e. round the North Star (Canto xiii, ll. 10-11).

l. 36. The Lateran, first palace of the popes and still in Dante's time their seat, stands here for Rome itself, which, even after Constantine had transferred the seat of Empire to Byzantium, still remained the most stately city in the world.

l. 39. The contrast memorably expressed in a dozen lines at the beginning of Canto xi is here concentrated into one lightning-flash. Excluded *there*, admitted *here*!

ll. 55-64. During Dante's absorption in this unexampled vision, Beatrice has imperceptibly returned to her place among the blessed. There is a studied likeness in contrast to the vanishing of Virgil (*Purgatorio* xxx. 40 ff.).

l. 65. St. Bernard speaks.

ll. 79-90. Dante's prayer to the Heavenly Beatrice.

l. 104. The touching legend is that a woman, Berenice (of which Veronica is an altered form) offered Jesus on the way to Calvary a kerchief to wipe his face; when the cloth was returned the features of the Lord were stamped upon it. This kerchief or veil, the *santo sudario*, was shown in Holy Week, and is now kept at St. Peter's. The word Veronica, used by Dante for the relic itself, may be derived from *verus* (true) and *icon* (image). Cf. Section 41 of the *Vita Nuova*.

l. 115. Bernard directs the Poet to look up to the Queen of Heaven.

l. 142. The quieter tone of this Canto, with its lovely, familiar images of the bees, the Northman in Rome, the pilgrim in the temple of his vow, the Croatian gazing upon the picture of his Saviour, the angels at their games—is in marked contrast with the splendours and intensity of the thirtieth.

Canto Trentesimosecondo

CANTO TRENTESIMOSECONDO

- 1 Affetto al suo piacer quel contemplante
libero officio di dottore assunse,
e cominciò queste parole sante:
- 4 'La piaga che Maria richiuse ed unse,
quella ch'è tanto bella da' suoi piedi
è colei che l'aperse e che la punse.
- 7 Nell'ordine che fanno i terzi sedi,
siede Rachel di sotto da costei
con Beatrice, sì come tu vedi.
- 10 Sara, Rebecca, Judit, e colei
che fu bisava al cantor che per doglia
del fallo disse: *Miserere mei*,
- 13 Puoi tu veder così di soglia in soglia
giù digradar, com'io ch'a proprio nome
vo per la rosa giù di foglia in foglia.
- 16 E dal settimo grado in giù, sì come
infino ad esso, succedono Ebree,
dirimendo del fior tutte le chiome;
- 19 Perchè, secondo lo sguardo che fee
la fede in CRISTO, queste sono il muro
a che si parton le sacre scalee.
- 22 Da questa parte onde il fior è maturo
di tutte le sue foglie, sono assisi
quei che credettero in CRISTO venturo.
- 25 Dall'altra parte, onde sono intercisi
di voti i semicircoli, si stanno
quei ch' a CRISTO venuto ebber li visi.
- 28 E come quinci il glorioso scanno
della Donna del cielo, e gli altri scanni
di sotto lui cotanta cerna fanno,
- 31 Così di contra quel del gran Giovanni,
che sempre santo il deserto e il martiro
sofferse, e poi l'Inferno da due anni;
- 34 E sotto lui così cerner sortiro
Francesco, Benedetto ed Augustino,
ed altri sin quaggiù di giro in giro.

CANTO XXXII

Order of Places in the Mystic Amphitheatre

- 1 That contemplator took the office free
of teacher, while intent upon his bliss,
beginning with these holy words to me:
4 'The wound by Mary balmed and covered, this
that woman fair reposing at her feet
inflicted, opening the cicatrice.
7 Beneath her third in order has her seat
Rachel, and thou beholdest at her side
Beatrice. Below these in order meet
10 Sara, Rebecca, Judith, and that bride,
great-grandame of the singer who for grief
of his own guilt the *Miserere* cried:
13 From rank to rank descending, these in chief
mayst thou behold, as, naming each one, I
go downward through the Rose from leaf to leaf.
16 And from the seventh degree, as from on high
to it, are Hebrew women cutting through
all petals of the Flower successively;
19 For these, according to the point of view
whence looked their faith to Christ, compose a blended
wall that divides the sacred stair in two.
22 Upon this side where every petal splendid
is full in bloom, are seated in their places
all who believed in Christ not yet descended;
25 And those half-circling ranks, with vacant spaces
on the other side, with happy intuition
to Christ already risen turned their faces.
28 And just as here the glorious position
of Heaven's Lady, and the others one by one
below it, constitute so great division,
31 So counterposed is that of mighty John,
who bore the desert, martyrdom in fine,
and, holy still, two years in Hell thereon;
34 And Francis, Benedict, and Augustine,
with others hitherward from row to row
continue downward the dividing line.

- 37 Or mira l' alto provveder divino,
chè l' uno e l' altro aspetto della fede
egualmente empierà questo giardino.
- 40 E sappi che dal grado in giù, che fiede
a mezzo il tratto le due discrezioni,
per nullo proprio merito si siede,
- 43 Ma per l' altrui, con certe condizioni;
chè tutti questi son spiriti assolti
prima ch' avesser vere elezioni.
- 46 Ben te ne puoi accorger per li volti,
ed anco per le voci puerili,
se tu li guardi bene e se gli ascolti.
- 49 Or dubbi tu, e dubitando sili;
ma io ti solverò 'l forte legame,
in che ti stringon li pensier sottili.
- 52 Dentro all' ampiezza di questo reame
casual punto non puote aver sito,
se non come tristizia o sete o fame;
- 55 Chè per eterna legge è stabilito
quantunque vedi, sì che giustamente
ci si risponde dall' anello al dito.
- 58 E però questa festinata gente
a vera vita non è *sine causa*
intra sè qui più e meno eccellente.
- 61 Lo Rege, per cui questo regno pausa
in tanto amore ed in tanto diletto,
che nulla volontà è di più ausa,
- 64 Le menti tutte nel suo lieto aspetto
creando, a suo piacer di grazia dota
diversamente; e qui basti l' effetto.
- 67 E ciò espresso e chiaro vi si nota
nella Scrittura santa in quei gemelli,
che nella madre ebber l' ira commota.
- 70 Però, secondo il color dei capelli
di cotal grazia l' altissimo lume
degnamente convien che s' incappelli.
- 73 Dunque, senza mercè di lor costume
locati son per gradi differenti,
sol differendo nel primiero acume.

- 37 Now see high Providence Divine, and know
that one and the other phase of our believing
shall to this garden equally bestow.
- 40 And know that down from yonder circle, cleaving
across, midway on the partitions two,
sit they, no meed of merit so retrieving,
- 43 But meed of others, by conditions due;
for these are souls who did the flesh divest
before they could make any choices true.
- 46 This by their countenances may be guessed
and by the tune their childish voices hum,
if thou but lookest well and listenest.
- 49 Now doubttest thou, and doubting makes thee dumb;
but I will shatter for thee the strong chain
of subtle thought which is so cumbersome.
- 52 The boundless amplitudes of this domain
no particle of accident admit,
more than of hunger, thirst, or any pain,
- 55 For Law Eternal has established it
in what thou seest, that with exactitude
duly the ring doth to the finger fit.
- 58 Wherefore this swiftly hasting multitude,
seeking true life, are not without causation
placed at a higher or lower altitude.
- 61 The King through whom reposing is this nation
in so great love and in such Paradise
that none aspires to loftier consummation,
- 64 All minds creating in His own glad eyes,
at His good pleasure doth with grace endue
diversely; and here let the fact suffice.
- 67 And this expressly is made clear to you
in Scripture, by that twin-embrothered pair
who even in their mother angry grew.
- 70 Whence fittingly the light supremely fair
may crown us with a chaplet of that grace
according to the colour of the hair.
- 73 They stand then, not by merit of their ways,
at different stages, only differing
themselves in primal keenness of their gaze.

- 76 Bastava sì nei secoli recenti
con l'innocenza, per aver salute,
solamente la fede dei parenti;
- 79 Poichè le prime etadi fur compiute,
convenne ai maschi all'innocenti penne,
per circoncidere, acquistar virtute.
- 82 Ma poichè il tempo della grazia venne,
senza battesimo perfetto di CRISTO,
tale innocenza laggiù si ritenne.
- 85 Riguarda omai nella faccia ch' a CRISTO
più si somiglia, chè la sua chiarezza
sola ti può disporre a veder CRISTO.'
- 88 Io vidi sopra lei tanta allegrezza
piover, portata nelle menti sante,
create a trasvolar per quella altezza,
- 91 Che quantunque io avea visto davante,
di tanta ammirazion non mi sospese,
nè mi mostrò di Dio tanto sembiente.
- 94 E quell' amor che primo lì discese,
cantando: *Ave Maria, gratia plena,*
dinanzi a lei le sue ali distese.
- 97 Rispose alla divina cantilena
da tutte parti la beata Corte,
sì ch'ogni vista sen fe' più serena.
- 100 'O santo Padre, che per me comporte
l'esser quaggiù, lasciando il dolce loco
nel qual tu siedi per eterna sorte,
- 103 Qual è quell' Angel, che con tanto gioco
guarda negli occhi la nostra Regina,
innamorato sì, che par di foco?'
- 106 Così ricorsi ancora alla dottrina
di colui, ch'abbelliva di Maria,
come del sole stella mattutina.
- 109 Ed egli a me: 'Baldezza e leggiadria,
quanta esser può in Angelo ed in alma,
tutta è in lui, e sì volem che sia,
- 112 Perch'egli è quegli che portò la palma
giù a Maria, quando il Figliuol di Dio
carcar si volle della nostra salma

- 76 So, when the centuries were at the spring,
sufficient was the parents' faith, along
with native innocence, for rescuing;
- 79 And when the centuries were no longer young,
'twas needful that the males by circumcision
should have their innocent pinions rendered strong;
- 82 But since the era of free grace has risen,
if lacking perfect baptism into Christ,
such innocence has been kept down in prison.
- 85 Look now upon the face most like to Christ
in its fair lineaments, whose radiance bright
alone can make thee fit to look on Christ.'
- 88 I saw rain down upon her such delight
carried by those intelligences good
created all for soaring through that height,
- 91 That whatsoever I before had viewed
did never so suspend my soul in wonder
nor show me of God so great similitude.
- 94 And that Love who had flown before thereunder
singing: 'Hail Mary, full of grace benign!'
now spread in front of her his wings asunder.
- 97 Responses to the minstrelsy divine
rang through the blessed Court from all and some,
making all features more serenely shine.
- 100 'O holy Father, who endurest to come
for me down here, quitting the blissful quire
where by divine allotment is thy home,
- 103 Who is that Angel who with glad desire
looks in the eyes of our own Empress yon,
enamoured so, he seems a flame of fire?'
- 106 So turned I to the teaching of that one
who gathered beauty out of Mary's face
as does the star of morning from the sun.
- 109 And he to me: 'All confidence and grace
are in him, much as ever was conferred on
angel or soul, and willing is our praise,
- 12 For this is he who brought the palm as guerdon
to Mary down, when took without distrust
the very Son of God our fleshly burden.

- 115 Ma vieni omai con gli occhi, sì com'io
andrò parlando, e nota i gran patrici
di questo imperio giustissimo e pio.
- 118 Quei due che seggon lassù più felici,
per esser propinquissimi ad Augusta,
son d'esta rosa quasi due radici.
- 121 Colui che da sinistra le s'aggiusta,
è il Padre, per lo cui ardito gusto
l'umana specie tanto amaro gusta.
- 124 Dal destro vedi quel Padre vestuto
di santa Chiesa, cui CRISTO le chiavi
raccomandò di questo fior venusto.
- 127 E quei che vide tutt'i tempi gravi,
pria che morisse, della bella sposa
che s'acquistò con la lancia e coi chiavi,
- 130 Siede lung'h'esso; e lungo l'altro posa
quel Duca, sotto cui visse di manna
la gente ingrata, mobile e ritrosa.
- 133 Di contro a Pietro vedi sedere Anna,
tanto contenta di mirar sua figlia,
che non move occhi per cantare *Osanna*.
- 136 E contro al maggior Padre di famiglia
siede Lucia, che mosse la tua Donna,
quando chinavi a ruinar le ciglia.
- 139 Ma perchè il tempo fugge che t'assonna,
qui farem punto, come buon sartore
che, com'egli ha del panno, fa la gonna;
- 142 E drizzeremo gli occhi al primo amore,
sì che, guardando verso lui, penetri,
quant'è possibil, per lo suo fulgore.
- 145 Veramente (nè forse tu t'arresti
movendo l'ali tue, credendo oltrarti)
orando grazia convien che s'impetri,
- 148 Grazia da quella che può aiutarti;
e tu mi segui con l'affezione,
sì che dal dicer mio lo cor non parti.'
- 151 E cominciò questa santa orazione.

- 115 But follow with thine eyes now, for I must
pursue the theme, and mark the throng of those
great peers of this most holy realm and just.
- 118 The twain who most enraptured there repose,
through being next neighbours to Augusta fair,
are as the double roots of this our Rose.
- 121 He who upon the left is next her there
is that First Sire by whose audacious taste
mankind is savouring such bitter fare.
- 124 That ancient Father of Holy Church, once graced
by Christ with keys of this fair realm, beside
our Lady, and upon her right, is placed.
- 127 And that one who beheld before he died
all grievous days of her purchased for us
at cost of lance and nails, Christ's own fair Bride,
- 130 Sits next that Father; and over against him thus
that Leader under whom were fed with manna
the folk ungrateful, headstrong, mutinous.
- 133 Opposite Peter seest thou seated Anna,
so happy in her daughter that no whit
she moves her eyes away to sing Hosanna.
- 136 Our greatest of housefathers opposite
sits Lucy, who impelled thy Lady down
when thou wast heading straight toward the Pit.
- 139 But since Time speeds along thy trance to drown,
here let us pause, like prudent tailor who
patterns according to the cloth the gown;
- 142 And to the Primal Love turn we our view,
so that, on visionary wing upspeeding,
thou pierce as in thee lies his radiance through.
- 145 Yet lest thou, peradventure, while receding,
flutter thy wings, advancing but in thought,
let grace be our petition, grace exceeding
- 148 Through her with power to help thee must be sought;
and do thou follow me with adoration
that from my word thy heart be severed not.'
- 151 Here he began this holy supplication:

NOTES

l. 4. Mary. *l.* 5. Eve. *l.* 8. Rachel.

l. 10. Sara, Rebecca, Judith, Ruth.

l. 15. For the diagram see Gardner's *Dante*.

l. 31. Between his own death and that of his Lord. Here he sits on the opposite side of the vast amphitheatre on the seat corresponding to that of the Mother of the Saviour.

ll. 37 ff. In Dante's vast intellect, reasoning power balanced—perhaps sometimes overbalanced—imagination. Parts of this Canto, like *Inferno* xi and the second half of *Purgatorio* xvii, appeal rather to those studious of system than to lovers of poetry. They bear much the same relation to the Poem as a whole that an architect's draft bears to the finished miracle of stone. The books of reference contain diagrams of the 'Mystic Rose', but the diagram banishes the mystic. 'The parting genius is with sighing sent.' Those whose minds are overstrained by the poetry will do well to construct the diagram from the data so clearly furnished by the verses. After the passages of *recitativ* (which may no doubt be artfully introduced for relief) how gloriously the symphony is again intoned! Some of the positions assigned are significant of Dante's judgments of men. Eve, as directly created by God and as a type of eugenic perfection, is placed only below Mary: St. Francis *en face*. The contemplative, scholarly Benedict sits opposite the contemplative Rachel (cf. *Purgatorio* xxvii. 100–8), by whose side is Beatrice. Nothing is said of Dominic. By the fancy of the artist, the elect who have believed since the crucifixion have assigned to them exactly the same number of places as those assigned to believers of the old dispensation. Below the horizontal line of division, nearest the mystic sea of light, are the multitudes of innocent children saved by the faith and obedience of parents.

l. 72. The different complexions of Jacob and Esau symbolize the variations in the gift of grace.

ll. 83–7. The rime again on the sacred name.

l. 106. St. Bernard.

l. 112. The Archangel Gabriel.

l. 140. The Poet of the Divine does not need to take thought for the dignity of his allusions. Let us call him an architect, with an eye to symmetry. *Paradiso* exceeds *Purgatorio* by only three lines.

l. 151. Compare the close of Canto v.

Canto Trentesimoterzo

CANTO TRENTESIMOTERZO

- 1 'Vergine Madre, figlia del tuo Figlio,
umile ed alta più che creatura,
termine fisso d'eterno consiglio,
4 Tu se' colei che l'umana natura
nobilitasti sì, che il suo Fattore
non disdegnò di farsi sua fattura.
7 Nel ventre tuo si raccese l'amore,
per lo cui caldo nell'eterna pace
così è germinato questo fiore.
10 Qui sei a noi meridiana face
di caritate, e giuso intra i mortali
sei di speranza fontana vivace.
13 Donna, sei tanto grande e tanto vali,
che qual vuol grazia ed a te non ricorre,
sua disianza vuol volar senz'ali.
16 La tua benignità non pur soccorre
a chi domanda, ma molte fiate
liberamente al domandar precorre.
19 In te misericordia, in te pietate,
in te magnificenza, in te s'aduna
quantunque in creatura è di bontate.
22 Or questi, che dall'infima lacuna
dell'universo infin qui ha vedute
le vite spirituali ad una ad una,
25 Supplica a te per grazia di virtute
tanto che possa con gli occhi levarsi
più alto verso l'ultima salute.
28 Ed io, che mai per mio veder non arsi
più ch'io fo per lo suo, tutti i miei preghi
ti porgo, e prego che non sieno scarsi,
31 Perchè tu ogni nube gli dislegghi
di sua mortalità co' preghi tuoi,
sì che il sommo piacer gli si dispieghi.
34 Ancor ti prego, Regina, che puoi
ciò che tu vuoi, che conservi sani,
dopo tanto veder, gli affetti suoi.

CANTO XXXIII

The Ultimate Vision

- 1 'Daughter of thine own Son, thou Virgin Mother,
of the eternal counsel issue fated,
lowlier and loftier than any other,
- 4 To such nobility hast thou translated
man's nature that its Maker did not spurn
to make Himself the thing that He created.
- 7 Beneath thy heart was made again to burn
the Love by virtue of whose warmth withal
this Flower has blossomed in the peace eterne.
- 10 A living torch here art thou to us all
to kindle love, and down where mortals sigh
thou art a fount of hope perennial.
- 13 Thou art so prevailing, Lady, and so high
that who wants grace and will to thee not run
would have his longing without pinions fly.
- 16 Thy loving-kindness fails to succour none
imploring it, but often is so free
as to anticipate the orison.
- 19 In thee is mercy, pity is in thee,
in thee munificence, in thee a host
of human virtues are in unity.
- 22 This man, who hither from the nethermost
pool of the world comes making observation
of spiritual natures, ghost on ghost,
- 25 Now doth to thee of grace make supplication
that he by vision may uplift his being
still higher toward the Ultimate Salvation.
- 28 And I, who never burned for mine own seeing
more than I do for his, imploring pray
with all my soul, and pray for thine agreeing,
- 31 That thou drive every mortal cloud away
which darkens round him, with thine interceding,—
be the Chief Joy unveiled to him to-day.
- 34 Hear, all-prevailing Queen, my further pleading,
keep his affections through thy vigilance
sound for him, after vision so exceeding.

- 37 Vinca tua guardia i movimenti umani:
vedi Beatrice con quanti Beati
per li miei preghi ti chiudon le mani.’
- 40 Gli occhi da Dio dilette e venerati,
fissi nell’ orator, ne dimostraro
quanto i devoti preghi le son grati.
- 43 Indi all’ eterno lume si drizzaro,
nel qual non si de’ creder che s’ invii
per creatura l’ occhio tanto chiaro.
- 46 Ed io ch’ al fine di tutti i disii
m’ appropinquava, sì com’ io dovea,
l’ ardor del desiderio in me finii.
- 49 Bernardo m’ accennava, e sorridea,
perch’ io guardassi suso; ma io era
già per me stesso tal qual ei volea;
- 52 Chè la mia vista, venendo sincera,
e più e più entrava per lo raggio
dell’ alta luce, che da sè è vera.
- 55 Da quinci innanzi il mio veder fu maggio
che il parlar nostro, ch’ a tal vista cede,
e cede la memoria a tanto oltraggio.
- 58 Qual è colui che sognando vede,
e dopo il sogno la passione impressa
rimane, e l’ altro alla mente non riede;
- 61 Cotal son io, chè quasi tutta cessa
mia visione, ed ancor mi distilla
nel cor lo dolce che nacque da essa.
- 64 Così la neve al sol si disigilla,
così al vento nelle foglie lievi
si perdea la sentenza di Sibilla.
- 67 O somma luce, che tanti ti levi
dai concetti mortali, alla mia mente
ripresta un poco di quel che parevi,
- 70 E fa la lingua mia tanto possente,
ch’ una favilla sol della tua gloria
possa lasciare alla futura gente;
- 73 Chè per tornare alquanto a mia memoria,
e per sonare un poco in questi versi,
più si conceperà di tua vittoria.

- 37 Quell by thy watchcare baser human wants:
lo, yonder, Beatrice with all the blest
clasping their hands to thee are suppliants.'
- 40 The venerated eyes, belovèd best
of God, attent on him who made the prayer,
showed us her pleasure in devout request;
- 43 Then plunged into the Light Eternal, where
we may not think of any creature turning
an eye that penetrates so clearly there.
- 46 And I who to the goal of every yearning
was drawing near, slaked, as was meet for me,
and satisfied the thirst within me burning.
- 49 Then Bernard beckoned to me smilingly
to look aloft; but I already grew
of my own accord as he would have me be;
- 52 Because, becoming purified, my view
now more and more was entering the ray
of the deep Light that in itself is true.
- 55 Thenceforth my seeing was more than tongue can say,
yields our discourse before the Light Supreme,
and violated memory falls away.
- 58 Like him who sees while dreaming, and the dream
remains thereafter traced upon his feeling,
while memory holds thereof no other gleam,
- 61 Even such am I; for though the great revealing
fades almost all away from me, yet flow
its drops of sweetness in my heart distilling.
- 64 Thus in the sun evanishes the snow;
upon the light leaves by the zephyr drifted
the wisdom of the Sibyl perished so.
- 67 O Light Supreme, who art so high uplifted
from mortal thought, still let my mind with some
of what thou didst appear to me, be gifted,
- 70 And dower my tongue with so great masterdom
that one sole sparkle of thy glory be
thereby transmitted to the folk to come;
- 73 For by some glimpses caught by memory,
and by some echo in these rhymes, perchance
better shall be conceived thy victory.

- 76 Io credo, per l'acume ch'io soffersi
del vivo raggio, ch'io sarei smarrito,
se gli occhi miei da lui fossero aversi.
- 79 E mi ricorda ch'io fui più ardito
per questo a sostener tanto, ch'io giunsi
l'aspetto mio col valor infinito.
- 82 O abbondante grazia, ond'io presunsi
ficcar lo viso per la luce eterna
tanto, che la veduta vi consunsi!
- 85 Nel suo profondo vidi che s'interna,
legato con amore in un volume,
ciò che per l'universo si squaderna;
- 88 Sustanzia ed accidenti e lor costume,
quasi conflati insieme per tal modo,
che ciò ch'io dico è un semplice lume.
- 91 La forma universal di questo nodo
credo ch'io vidi, perchè più di largo,
dicendo questo, mi sento ch'io godo.
- 94 Un punto solo m'è maggior letargo,
che venticinque secoli alla impresa,
che fe' Nettuno ammirar l'ombra d'Argo.
- 97 Così la mente mia, tutta sospesa,
mirava fissa immobile ed attenta,
e sempre di mirar faceasi accesa.
- 100 A quella luce cotal si diventa,
che volgersi da lei per altro aspetto
è impossibil che mai si consenta;
- 103 Perocchè il ben ch'è del volere obbietto,
tutto s'accoglie in lei, e fuor di quella
è difettivo ciò che lì è perfetto.
- 106 Omai sarà più corta mia favella,
pure a quel ch'io ricordo, che di un fante
che bagni ancor la lingua alla mammella.
- 109 Non perchè più ch'un semplice sembiante
fosse nel vivo lume ch'io mirava,
che tal è sempre qual era davante;
- 112 Ma per la vista che s'avvalorava
in me guardando, una sola parvenza,
mutandom'io, a me si travagliava:

- 76 Pierced by the vivid living radiance
methinks I had been lost, if by the sight
bewildered, I had turned aside my glance;
- 79 And I remember, till I could unite
my gaze therewith, my hardihood to dare
the vision of the Goodness Infinite.
- 82 O plenteous grace, whence I presumed to bear
the stress of the Eternal Light, till thirst
was consummated in the seeing there!
- 85 I saw in its abysmal deep immersed,
together in one volume bound with love,
what is throughout the universe dispersed:
- 88 Substance and accidents all thereabove
so interfused in property and mood,
that what I say gives but scant glimpse thereof.
- 91 Of this same fusion do I think I viewed
the universal form, for uttering
this word, I feel ampler beatitude.
- 94 To me more Lethë doth one moment bring
than five and twenty centuries for the emprise
whence Argo's shade set Neptune wondering.
- 97 So was my spirit gazing, all surmise,
steadfast, intent, in absolute repose,
and evermore enkindled through the eyes.
- 100 In presence of that radiance one grows
so rapt, it is impossible the soul
could yield to turn aside to other shows;
- 103 Because the Good, which is volition's goal,
all gathers there, and the deficient rest
outside it, there becomes a perfect whole.
- 106 Now will my words fall even shorter, in quest
of my remembrance, than the infant lore
of him whose tongue is moistened at the breast.
- 109 Not that the Living Light I saw gave more
than one sole semblance to my contemplation,
for it is always what it was before;
- 112 But by my gathered strength of observation,
one sole appearance, unto me thus seeing,
was ever changing with my transformation.

- 115 Nella profonda e chiara sussistenza
dell'alto lume parvemi tre giri
di tre colori e d'una continenza;
118 E l'un dall'altro, come Iri da Iri,
parea riflesso, e il terzo pareo foco
che quinci e quindi egualmente si spiri.
121 O quanto è corto il dire, e come fioco
al mio concetto! e questo a quel ch'io vidi
è tanto, che non basta a dicer 'poco'.
124 O luce eterna, che sola in te sidi,
sola t'intendi, e da te intelletta
ed intendente te, ami ed arridi!
127 Quella circolazion, che sì concetta
pareva in te come lume riflesso,
dagli occhi miei alquanto circonspetta,
130 Dentro da sè del suo colore stesso
mi parve pinta della nostra effige,
per che il mio viso in lei tutto era messo.
133 Qual è 'l geometra che tutto s'affige
per misurar lo cerchio, e non ritrova
pensando quel principio ond'egli indige;
136 Tale era io a quella vista nuova:
veder voleva, come si convenne
l'imago al cerchio, e come vi s'indova;
139 Ma non eran da ciò le proprie penne,
se non che la mia mente fu percossa
da un fulgore, in che sua voglia venne.
142 All'alta fantasia qui mancò possa;
ma già volgeva il mio disiro e il *velle*,
sì come rota ch'egualmente è mossa,
145 L'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle.

- 115 To me within the luminous deep being
of Lofty Light appeared three circles, showing
three colours, and in magnitude agreeing;
118 And from the First appeared the Second flowing
like Iris out of Iris, and the Third
seemed fire that equally from both is glowing.
121 O but how scant, how feeble any word
to my conceit! and this to what I viewed
is such, to call it little were absurd.
124 O Light Eterne, who dost thyself include,
who lovest, smiling at thine own intents,
self-understanding and self-understood!
127 That circling which in Thee seemed effluence
of light reverberated, by my view
surveyed awhile in its circumference,
130 Within itself of its own proper hue
seemed painted with the effigy of man,
whereat my sight was wholly set thereto.
133 As the geometer, intent to scan
the measure of the circle, fails to trace,
think as he may, some feature of the plan,
136 Such I at the strange vision of the Face:
how the image fits the circle, fain aright
would I perceive, and how it there finds place;
139 But my own wings were not for such a flight—
except that, smiting through the mind of me,
there came fulfilment in a flash of light.
142 Here vigour failed the lofty fantasy;
but my volition now, and my desires,
were moved like wheel revolving evenly
145 By Love that moves the sun and starry fires.

NOTES

Profound intellect and simple taste, animated by something deeper which some would term Genius and others would reverence as Grace, have shaped this final canto into one of the summits of all poetry. Here is no theatrical décor, no player king orientally enthroned. In the fluctuant auroral splendours of Cantos xxx and xxxi the Deity is present only as the invisible source of all light. In this 'safe and happy kingdom' the beings who partake most of the Divine Nature seem to be women—Mary, Rachel, Beatrice. Previously the Deity had been seen only as a Point of supreme brilliance. Now that the Poet is graced with a nearer view, the Point appears widened to a Circle containing the features of the human face. By this symbol the mind is baffled as the geometer is baffled by the problem of the quadrature of the circle. How does the image fit the circle and how does it 'inwhere itself' there? To the brooding, eager mind the conclusion comes in a flash: the symbol denotes the final repose of the human will in the encirclement of the Divine Will. For this solution we have been prepared by the great word of Piccarda: 'in His will is our peace' (Canto iii, l. 85, and note.)

ll. 1-21. Compare the invocation to Mary by Chaucer in the prologue to 'Second Nun's Tale'; also the prologue to 'Prioress's Tale'—both free imitations of this prayer of St. Bernard.

l. 22. This nethermost pool may be the frozen pool of Cocytus at the bottom of Hell and centre of earth; although some think it to be Hell as a whole, wherein Dante made some notable observations of perverted spirit-natures.

ll. 35-9. After the unexampled exaltation of the Beatific Vision Dante is to return to this world to be subject to all the insidious temptations to which flesh is heir, and well is he aware that he requires to be especially safeguarded. Nowhere does the proud, indignant poet give more signal proof of true Christian humility. Dante's besetting sin may be, as he himself admits, pride (see his conversation with Sapia, *Purgatorio* xiii. 133-8). But his pride never is spiritual pride—that odious malady of shallow self-complacence, a cancer fatal to the life of the soul. And he knows that the highest ecstasies of art, music, literature, even spiritual vision, are in themselves no insurance against falling back when the rapture is past.

l. 65. Cf. *Aeneid* iii. 441-52.

ll. 76-99. Note the contrast between the 'credo' (methinks), of ll. 77 and 91, and the triumphant 'I saw' thrice repeated instead of the rhyme in Canto xxx, l. 95, 97, 99. The Poet has caught a fleeting glimpse of That which infinite vision is required for really seeing; That wherein substance and accidents are interfused. His consciousness of having seen the Ineffable, Alpha and Omega of created things, is ratified by the ampler beatitude with which the statement fills him. He recalls only enough to be aware that of the one Point he has forgotten more than in twenty-five centuries men have had time to forget of the memorable emprise of those heroes who sailed in the Argo: that first ship whose shadow, clouding for a moment the light of Neptune's submarine palace, caused the god to look up with foreboding and to murmur:

'Can such things be
And overcome us like a summer's cloud
Without our special wonder?'

For 'substance and accidents' cf. xxiv. 69, note.

ll. 106-8. There is a reminiscence of this in the prologue to 'Prioress's Tale':

'But as a child of twelf month olde or lesse
That can unnethës any word expresse.'

Cf. the same tender image in xxx. 82-4.

ll. 118-20. So the Son emanates from the Father and the Holy Ghost emanates equally from both, as one rainbow is reflected by another.

ll. 130 ff. The circling which appeared effluence of divine reflected light seemed to contain our effigy: emblem of the god-man. The circle is the image of perfection and, as we have seen, the act of circling is the image of beatitude. While Dante is absorbed, like the geometer who would square the circle, in studying the conformity of the effigy and the circle, his desire is in a flash fulfilled. Then, as the wings of imaginative vision flag, he finds will and desire moved, like a wheel turning evenly, by the Love that moves the sun and stars. In the original the word *stelle* (stars) is the last of each one of the three *cantichë*.

INDEX

OF PROPER NAMES AND NOTABLE MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE DIVINE COMEDY

ADAPTED FROM THAT OF

PAGET TOYNBEE, M.A., D.LITT.

-] This sign placed after a name indicates that the person or the place is only implied without being explicitly mentioned: e.g. **Abati.**] Par. xvi. 109.
- When a name is sometimes mentioned, and sometimes only implied, the references are separated by this sign: e.g. **Antaeus.** Inf. xxxi. 100, 113, 139;—xxxii. 17.
- () When an allusion is uncertain, or only conjectural, the reference to the passage is enclosed between these signs: e.g. **Eric**], King of Norway. (Par. xix. 139.)
- v.l.* indicates a variant reading.
- Abati.**] Par. xvi. 109.
- Abati, Bocca degli.** Inf. xxxii. 106;—xxxii. 78, 85, 110.
- Abbagliato.** Inf. xxix. 132.
- Abel.** Inf. iv. 56.
- Abraham.** Inf. iv. 58.
- Absalom.** Inf. xviii. 137.
- Abydos.** Purg. xxviii. 74.
- Acciaiuoli, Niccola.**] Purg. xii. 105.
- Accorso, Francesco d'.** Inf. xv. 110.
- Achan.** Purg. xx. 109.
- Acheron.** Inf. iii. 78; xiv. 116; Purg. ii. 105;—Inf. iii. 71, 98, 118; Purg. i. 88.
- Achilles.** Inf. v. 65; xii. 71; xxvi. 62; xxxi. 5; Purg. ix. 34; xxi. 92.
- Acone.** Par. xvi. 65.
- Acquacheta.** Inf. xvi. 97-9.
- Acquasparta.** Par. xii. 124.
- Acre.** Inf. xxvii. 89.
- Actium.**] Par. vi. 77.
- Acts of the Apostles.**] Purg. xxix. 134-8, 145-8.
- Adam.** Inf. iii. 115; Purg. ix. 10; xi. 44; xxix. 86; xxxii. 37;—Inf. iv. 55; Purg. i. 24; xxviii. 142; xxxiii. 62; Par. vii. 26, 86, 148; xiii. 37, 82, 111; xxvi. 83, 91, 92, 100; xxxii. 120, 122, 136.
- Adam, Master.** Inf. xxx. 61, 104;—xxx. 49-99, 102, 104-8, 14, 118-20, 124-9.
- Adige.** Inf. xii. 5; Purg. xvi. 115; Par. ix. 44.
- Adimari.**] Par. xvi. 115.
- Adrian V.** Purg. xix. 79-81, 89, 91, 97-126, 128-145.
- Adriatic.**] Inf. v. 98; Purg. xiv. 92; Par. xxi. 123.
- Aegina.** Inf. xxix. 59.
- Aeneas.** Inf. ii. 32; iv. 122; xxvi. 93;—Inf. i. 74; ii. 13; Purg. xviii. 137; Par. vi. 3; xv. 27.
- Aeneid.** Purg. xxi. 97;—Inf. i. 84; xx. 113; xxvi. 82; Purg. xxi. 95, 96.
- Aeolus.** Purg. xxviii. 21.
- Aesop.** Inf. xxiii. 4.
- Aethiop.** Purg. xxvi. 21; Par. xix. 109.
- Aetna.** Inf. xiv. 56;—Par. viii. 67-70. [**Mongibello.**]
- Africa.**] Purg. xxvi. 44; xxx. 89; xxxi. 72.
- Agamemnon.**] Par. v. 69.
- Agapetus.** Par. vi. 16.
- Agathon.** Purg. xxii. 107.
- Aghinolfo da Romena.**] Inf. xxx. 77.
- Aglauros.** Purg. xiv. 139.
- Agli, Lotto degli.**] Inf. xiii. 123-124.
- Agnello.** Inf. xxv. 68.
- Agobbio.** Purg. xi. 80.
- Aguglion.** Par. xvi. 56.
- Ahasuerus.** Purg. xxvii. 28.
- Ahithophel.** Inf. xxviii. 137.

- Alaglia.** Purg. xix. 142.
Alagna. Purg. xx. 86; Par. xxx. 148.
Alardo. Inf. xxviii. 18.
Alba. Par. vi. 37.
Alberichi. Par. xvi. 89.
Alberigo, Frà. Inf. xxxiii. 118.
Albero da Siena. Inf. xxix. 109.
Albert of Cologne. Par. x. 98.
Albert I, of Austria. Purg. vi. 97; Par. xix. 115.
Alberti, Alberto degli. Inf. xxxii. 57.
Alberti, Alessandro degli.] Inf. xxxii. 21.
Alberto Camicione. [Camicion de' Pazzi.]
Alberto da Siena. [Albero da Siena.]
Alberto della Scala.] Purg. xviii. 121.
Albertus Magnus. [Albert of Cologne.]
Alchemists.] Inf. xxix.
Alcides. [Hercules.]
Alcmaeon. Purg. xii. 50; Par. iv. 103.
Alderotto, Taddeo di. [Thaddeus.]
Aldighiero. [Alighiero.]
Aldobrandesco, Humbert. Purg. xi. 67.
Aldobrandesco, William. Purg. xi. 59.
Aldobrandi, Tegghiaio. Inf. vi. 79; xvi. 41.
Alecto. Inf. ix. 47.
Alessandria. Purg. vii. 135.
Alessandro Novello.] Par. ix. 52, 53.
Alessandro da Romena. Inf. xxx. 77.
Alessandro degli Alberti. [Alberti.]
Alessio Interminel. Inf. xviii. 122.
Alexander of Pherae.] Inf. xii. 107.)
Alexander the Great. Inf. xii. 107; xiv. 31.
Alf. Inf. xxviii. 32.
Alichino. Inf. xxi. 118; xxii. 112.
Alighieri.] Par. xv. 92, 138.
Alighieri, Bello degli. [Bello.]
Alighiero.] Par. xv. 91-4.
Alliotti.] Par. xvi. 112.
Alpha. Par. xxvi. 17.
Alphonso III. Purg. iii. 115; vii. 116.
Alps. Inf. xiv. 30; xx. 62; Purg. xvii. 1; xxxiii. 111; Par. vi. 51.
Amata.] Purg. xvii. 35.
Ambrose.] Purg. xxix. 142.
Amidel.] Par. xvi. 136.
Amphiaræus. Inf. xx. 34;—xiv. 68; Par. iv. 104.
Amphion. Inf. xxxii. 11.
Amyclas. Par. xi. 68.
Anagna. [Alagna.]
Ananias¹, Christian of Damascus. Par. xxvi. 12.
Ananias², husband of Sapphira. Purg. xx. 112.
Anastagi. Purg. xiv. 107.
Anastasius. Inf. xi. 8.
Anaxagoras. Inf. iv. 137.
Anchises. Inf. i. 74; Purg. xviii. 137; Par. xv. 25; xix. 132.
Ancus Marcius.] Par. vi. 41.
Andalò, Loderingo degli. [Loderingo.]
Andrea, Jacomo da Sant'. Inf. xiii. 133.
Andrea de' Mozzi.] Inf. xv. 112.
Andrew of Hungary.] Par. xix. 142.
Angelo, Castello Sant'.] Inf. xviii. 32.
Angels.] Par. xxviii. 126.
Angiolello. Inf. xxviii. 77.
Annas. Inf. xxiii. 121.
Anne, Saint. Par. xxxii. 133.
Anselm. Par. xii. 137.
Anselmuccio. Inf. xxxiii. 50;—xxxiii. 90.
Antæus. Inf. xxxi. 100, 113, 139;—xxxii. 17.
Antandros. Par. vi. 67.
Ante-Inferno.] Inf. iii. 1-69.
Antenor. Purg. v. 75.
Ante-Purgatorio.] Purg. i-viii.
Antenóra. Inf. xxxii. 88.
Anthony, Saint. Par. xxix. 124.
Antigone. Purg. xxii. 110.
Antiochus.] Inf. xix. 87.
Antiphon. Purg. xxii. 106.
Antipodes.] Inf. xxxiv. 113; Purg. ii. 1-6; iv. 66-87; Par. i. 43.
Apennines. Inf. xvi. 96; xx. 65 (v.l. Pennino); Purg. v. 96;—Inf. xxvii. 30; Purg. v. 116; xiv. 32, 92; xxx. 86; Par. xxi. 106.
Aperti, Mont'. Inf. xxxii. 81;—x. 85.
Apocalypse.] Inf. xix. 106-8; Purg. xxix. 105, 143-8; Par. xxv. 94-6.

- Apollo.** Par. i. 13; ii. 8; **Thymbraeus.** Purg. xii. 31; **Delphic delty.** Par. i. 32; **son of Latona.** Par. xxix. 1;—Purg. xx. 132; Par. i. 22; xiii. 25. [**Sun.**]
Apulia. Inf. xxviii. 9; Purg. vii. 126; **the Kingdom.** Purg. iii. 131;—Purg. v. 69.
Apulians. Inf. xxviii. 17.
Aquarius. Inf. xxiv. 2.
Aquiline, the ('Nasuto'). Purg. vii. 124. [**Charles I.**]
Aquilo. Purg. iv. 60; xxxii. 99.
Aquinas, St. Thomas. Purg. xx. 69; Par. x. 99; xii. 110, 144; xiv. 6;—Par. x. 82-138; xi. 16-139; xii. 2; xiii. 32-142.
Arabia. Inf. xxiv. 90.
Arabs. Par. vi. 49. [**Carthaginians.**]
Arachne. Inf. xvii. 18; Purg. xii. 43.
Aragon. Purg. iii. 116.
Arbla. Inf. x. 86.
Arca, Dell'. Par. xvi. 92.
Archangels. Par. xxviii. 125.
Archemorus.] Purg. xxvi. 94.
Archiano. Purg. v. 95, 125.
Archimandrite, St. Francis. Par. xi. 99. [**Francis.**]
Ardinghi. Par. xvi. 93.
Arethusa. Inf. xxv. 97.
Aretine¹, Griffolino. Inf. xxx. 31. [**Griffolino.**]
Aretine², Benincasa. Purg. vi. 13.
Aretine³], Cione de' Tarlati. Purg. vi. 15.
Aretines. Inf. xxii. 5;—Purg. xiv. 46, 47.
Arezzo. Inf. xxii. 5; xxix. 109;—Purg. xiv. 46-8.
Argenti, Filippo. Inf. viii. 61.
Argia. Purg. xxii. 110.
Argo. Par. xxxiii. 96.
Argolic folk. Inf. xxviii. 84.
Argonauts.] Inf. xviii. 86, 87; xxviii. 84; Par. ii. 16.
Argus. Purg. xxix. 95;—xxxii. 64-6.
Ariadne.] Inf. xii. 20; Par. xiii. 14.
Aries. Par. xxviii. 117; **Ram.** Purg. viii. 134; Par. xxix. 2;—Inf. i. 38; Purg. xxxii. 53; Par. i. 40; xxix. 2.
Aristotle. Purg. iii. 43;—**Master.** Inf. iv. 131; Par. viii. 120;—Purg. xxv. 63; Par. xxvi. 38.
Arius. Par. xiii. 127.
Arles. Inf. ix. 112.
Arnaldo Daniello. [Arnaut.]
Arnaut. Purg. xxvi. 142.
Arno. Inf. xiii. 146; xv. 113; xxiii. 95; xxx. 65; xxxiii. 83; Purg. v. 126; xiv. 24; Par. xi. 106;—Purg. v. 122; xiv. 17, 26, 51, 60.
Arrigo. Inf. vi. 80.
Arrigo Mainardi. Purg. xiv. 97.
Arrigucci. Par. xvi. 108.
Arsenal of the Venetians. Inf. xxi. 7.
Arthur. Inf. xxxii. 62.
Aruns. Inf. xx. 46.
Ascesi. Par. xi. 53.
Asciano, Caccia d'. Inf. xxix. 131.
Asdente. Inf. xx. 118.
Asopus. Purg. xviii. 91.
Assisi. Par. xi. 53.
Assyrians. Purg. xii. 59.
Astraea.] Purg. xxii. 71.
Astrology.] Purg. iv. 80.
Athamas. Inf. xxx. 4.
Athens. Inf. xii. 17; Purg. vi. 139; Par. xvii. 46;—Purg. xv. 97.
Athens, Duke of. Inf. xii. 17. [**Theseus.**]
Athlete, The holy. Par. xii. 56. [**Dominic.**]
Atlantic.] Inf. xxvi. 142; Par. xii. 49-51; xxvii. 82.
Atropos. Inf. xxxiii. 126.
Attila. Inf. xii. 134; xiii. 149.
Augusta. Par. xxxii. 119. [**Mary¹.]**
Augustine, a Franciscan. Par. xii. 130.
Augustine, St. Par. x. 120; xxxii. 35.
Augustus¹, emperor. Inf. i. 71; Purg. xxix. 116; **Octavian.** Purg. vii. 6;—Par. vi. 73.
Augustus², imperial title. Inf. xiii. 68. [**Frederick II.**]
Aulis. Inf. xx. 111.
Aurora. Purg. ii. 8; **Concubine of Tithonus.** Purg. ix. 1;—Par. xxx. 7.
Ausonia. Par. viii. 61. [**Italy.**]
Auster. Purg. xxxii. 99.
Austria. Inf. xxxii. 26.
Autumn. Inf. iii. 112.
Avaricious.] Inf. vii. 22-66; Purg. xix-xxii.
Avellana, Fonte.] Par. xxi. 110.
Aventine, Mount. Inf. xxv. 26.
Averroës. Inf. iv. 144;—Purg. xxv. 63.

- Avicenna.** Inf. iv. 143.
Azzo, Azzo VIII of Este. Inf. xviii. 56;—Inf. xii. 112; Purg. v. 77; xx. 80.
Azzo, Ugolino d'. Purg. xiv. 105.
Azzolino¹, Ezzelino III. Inf. xii. 110;—Par. ix. 29.
Azzolino², Ezzelino II. Par. ix. 31.
Babel. Purg. xii. 34; Par. xxvi. 125.
Babylon. Par. xxiii. 135 (*v.l.* Babilonia).
Bacchiglione. Inf. xv. 113;—Par. ix. 47.
Bacchus. Inf. xx. 59. Purg. xviii. 93; Par. xiii. 25;—Par. i. 17.
Bacchus, City of. [Thebes.]
Bagnacavallo. Purg. xiv. 115. [Malavicini.]
Bagnorea. Par. xii. 128.
Balance. Purg. ii. 5. [Libra.]
Baldo d' Aguglione. Par. xvi. 56.
Baptistery, Florence. Par. xv. 134; xvi. 47. **St. John.** Inf. xix. 17.
Barbagia. Purg. xxiii. 94, 96.
Barbarians. Purg. xxiii. 103; Par. xxxi. 31.
Barbariccia. Inf. xxi. 120; xxii. 29, 59, 145;—xxi. 138; xxii. 74, 94, 123.
Barbarossa. Purg. xviii. 119. [Frederick I.]
Bardi. Par. xvi. 94–8.
Bari. Par. viii. 62.
Bark of Peter. [Church, Holy.]
Baron, Ugo di Brandimburgo. Par. xvi. 128; St. Peter. Par. xxiv. 115 [Peter¹]; St. James. Par. xxv. 17 [James¹].
Barrators. Inf. xxi, xxii.
Bartolommeo Pignatello. Purg. iii. 124. [Cosenza.]
Bartolommeo della Scala. (Par. xvii. 71.)
Barucci. Par. xvi. 104.
Be. Par. vii. 14 (*v.l.* B).
Bear, Great and Little. Purg. iv. 65; Par. ii. 9.
Beatitudes. Purg. xii. 110; xv. 38; xvii. 68; xix. 50; xxii. 5; xxiv. 151; xxvii. 8; xxxix. 3.
Beatrice¹, B. Portinari. Inf. ii. 70, 103; Purg. vi. 46; xv. 77; xviii. 48, 73; xxiii. 128; xxvii. 36, 53; xxx. 73; xxxi. 80, 107, 114, 133; xxxii. 36, 85, 106; xxxiii. 4, 124; Par. i. 46, 64; ii. 22; iii. 127; iv. 13, 139; v. 16, 85, 122; vii. 16; ix. 16; x. 37, 52, 60; xi. 11; xiv. 8, 79; xv. 70; xvi. 13; xvii. 5, 30; xviii. 17, 53; xxi. 63; xxii. 125; xxiii. 19, 34, 76; xxiv. 10, 22, 55; xxv. 28, 137; xxvi. 77; xxvii. 34, 102; xxix. 8; xxx. 14, 128; xxxi. 59, 66, 76; xxxii. 9; xxxiii. 38; **Bice.** Par. vii. 14; Inf. ii. 53, 76, 103; x. 131; xv. 90; Purg. vi. 44; xxx. 64; xxxii. 122; Par. ii. 46; iii. 1, 23; iv. 118; v. 94; vii. 11; viii. 15; x. 93; xv. 54; xviii. 4, 8, 63; xxi. 23, 46; xxii. 1, 100; xxiii. 34; xxv. 49; xxviii. 3, 97; xxx. 75.
Beatrice², daughter of Count Raymond of Provence. Purg. vii. 128.
Beatrice³, daughter of Charles II, King of Naples. Purg. xx. 80.
Beatrice⁴, daughter of the Marquis Obizzo of Este. Purg. viii. 73.
Beccheria, Tesauo de'. Inf. xxxii. 119.
Beccio da Caprona. Purg. vi. 17.
Bede. Par. x. 131.
Beelzebub. Inf. xxxiv. 127. [Lucifer.]
Belacqua. Purg. iv. 123;—iv. 106.
Belisarius. Par. vi. 25.
Bella, mother of Dante. Inf. viii. 45.
Bella, Della. Par. xvi. 131, 132.
Bellincion. Par. xvi. 99; **B. Berti.** Par. xv. 112.
Bello degli Alighieri. Inf. xxix. 27.
Bello, Geri del. Inf. xxix. 27.
Beltramo dal Bornio. [Bertran.]
Belus. Par. ix. 97.
Benaco. Inf. xx. 63, 74, 77;—xx. 61, 66.
Benedict, St.¹ Par. xxxii. 35;—xxii. 28, 58.
Benedict, St.², mountain. Inf. xvi. 100.
Benevento. Purg. iii. 128.
Benincasa of Arezzo. Purg. vi. 13.
Berenger, Raymond. Par. vi. 134.
Bergamese. Inf. xx. 71.

- Bernard of Clairvaux.** Par. xxxi. 102, 139; xxxiii. 49;—xxxi. 59, 94, 110; xxxii. 1, 107.
Bernard of Quintavalle. Par. xi. 79.
Bernardin di Fosco. Purg. xiv. 101.
Bernardone, Pietro. Par. xi. 89;—Par. xi. 59, 62.
Bernell, Giraut de. Purg. xxvi. 120.
Berti, Bellincion. [Bellincion.]
Bertinoro. Purg. xiv. 112.
Bertran de Born. Inf. xxviii. 134;—Inf. xxix. 29.
Bethlehem.] Purg. xx. 23.
Bianchi.] Inf. vi. 65; xxiv. 150; Par. xvii. 62.
Bible. Par. iv. 43; xii. 125; xix. 83; xxix. 90; xxxii. 68; *Scriptures.* Par. xiii. 128; xxv. 88; *old and new parchments,* Par. xxiv. 93; *Old and New Testaments.* Par. v. 76;—xxix. 92.
Bice. [Beatrice¹.]
Billi.] Par. xvi. 103.
Bindi. Par. xxix. 103.
Bisdomini. Par. xvi. 112.
Bisenzio. Inf. xxxii. 56.
Bismantova. Purg. iv. 26.
Blacks. Inf. xxiv. 143. [Negri.]
Blasphemers. Inf. xiv. 13-72.
Bocca degli Abati. Inf. xxxii. 106;—xxxii. 78, 85, 110.
Boccio. [Beccio.]
Boëthius.] Par. x. 124-9.
Bohemia. Par. xix. 125;—Purg. vii. 99; Par. xix. 117.
Bologna. Inf. xxiii. 142; Purg. xiv. 100;—Inf. xviii. 61.
Bologna, Franco of. Purg. xi. 83.
Bolognese. Inf. xviii. 58; xxiii. 103;—Inf. xviii. 58-63.
Boisena. Purg. xxiv. 24.
Bonaccorsi, Pinamonte de'. Inf. xx. 96.
Bonagiunta. Purg. xxiv. 19, 20;—Purg. xxiv. 35.
Bonatti, Guido. Inf. xx. 118.
Bonaventura. Par. xii. 127.
Bonconte. [Buonconte.]
Bondelmonti. [Buondelmonti.]
Boniface VIII. Inf. xix. 53;—Inf. vi. 69; xxvii. 70, 85; Purg. viii. 131; xvi. 109, 110; xx. 87; xxxii. 149; xxxiii. 44; Par. ix. 142; xii. 90; xvii. 49-51; xviii. 128-36; xxvii. 22-4; xxx. 148.
Bonifazio da Signa. Par. xvi. 56.
Bonifazio de' Fieschi. Purg. xxiv. 29.
Bonsignori, Niccolò de'. [Niccolò.]
Bonturo. Inf. xxi. 41.
Boreas. Par. xxviii. 81.
Borgo Sant' Apostolo. Par. xvi. 134.
Born, Bertran de. Inf. xxviii. 134;—xxix. 29.
Borsiere, Guglielmo. Inf. xvi. 70.
Bostichi. Par. xvi. 93.
Bottaio, Martino.] Inf. xxi. 38.
Brabant. Purg. vi. 23.
Branca d'Oria. Inf. xxxiii. 137, 140;—xxxiii. 155.
Branda, Fonte. Inf. xxx. 78.
Brandenburg, Hugh of.] Par. xvi. 128.
Brennus. Par. vi. 44.
Brenta. Inf. xv. 7; Par. ix. 27.
Brescia. Inf. xx. 68.
Brescians. Inf. xx. 71.
Brettinoro. Purg. xiv. 112.
Briareus. Inf. xxxi. 98; Purg. xii. 28.
Brigata. Inf. xxxiii. 89.
Brosse, Pierre de la. Purg. vi. 22;—vi. 19.
Bruges. Inf. xv. 4; Purg. xx. 46.
Brundisium (Brindisi). Purg. iii. 27.
Brunelleschi, Agnello. Inf. xxv. 68.
Brunetto. Inf. xv. 30, 101; **B. Latino.** Inf. xv. 32;—Inf. xv. 23.
Brutus, Lucius Junius. Inf. iv. 127.
Brutus, Marcus Junius. Inf. xxxiv. 65; Par. vi. 74.
Bryson. Par. xiii. 125.
Buggea (Bougie). Par. ix. 92.
Buiamonte, Giovanni.] Inf. xvii. 72.
Bulgari.] Purg. xiv. 113.
Bulicame. Inf. xiv. 79.
Buonaccorsi. [Bonaccorsi.]
Buonagiunta. [Bonagiunta.]
Buonaventura. [Bonaventura.]
Buonconte. Purg. v. 88;—v. 85, 132.
Buondelmonte. Par. xvi. 140.
Buondelmonti. Par. xvi. 66.
Buoso. Inf. xxv. 140.
Buoso Donati. Inf. xxx. 44. Cf. Gianni Schicchi.

- Buoso da Duera.**] Inf. xxxii. 106, 114, 116.
- Caccia d'Ascian.** Inf. xxix. 131.
- Cacciaguida.** Par. xv. 135;—Par. xv. 20, 22, 31, 52, 85, 89; xvi. 16, 17, 18, 22, 30; xvii. 5, 28, 35, 101, 106, 121; xviii. 2, 25, 50, 51.
- Caccianimico, Venedico.** Inf. xviii. 50;—xviii. 40, 46, 66.
- Cacus.** Inf. xxv. 25; **Centaur.** Inf. xxv. 17;—xxv. 20, 34.
- Cadiz.** Par. xxvii. 82.
- Cadmus.** Inf. xxv. 97.
- Caecilius.** Purg. xxii. 98.
- Caesar, imperial title.** Par. i. 29; xvi. 59; (Albert) Purg. vi. 92, 114; (Frederick) Inf. xiii. 65; (Justinian) Par. vi. 10; (Tiberius) Par. vi. 86.
- Caesar, Julius.** Inf. i. 70; iv. 123; xxviii. 98; Purg. xviii. 101; xxvi. 77; Par. vi. 57;—Par. xi. 69.
- Cagnano.** Par. ix. 49.
- Cagnano, Angiolello da.** [Angiolello.]
- Cagnazzo.** Inf. xxi. 119; xxii. 106;—xxii. 120.
- Cahors.** Inf. xi. 50.
- Cahorsines.** Par. xxvii. 58. (Pope John XXII.)
- Calaphas.**] Inf. xxiii. 111, 115.
- Cain.** Inf. v. 107; xx. 126; Par. ii. 51;—Purg. xiv. 133.
- Cain and the Thorns.** [Moon.]
- Caina.** Inf. xxxii. 58.
- Calabrese.** Par. xii. 140.
- Calaroga.** [Callaroga.]
- Calboli.** Purg. xiv. 89.
- Calboli, Fulcieri da.**] Purg. xiv. 58.
- Calboli, Rinieri da.**] Purg. xiv. 88, 89.
- Calcabrina.** Inf. xxi. 118; xxii. 133.
- Calchas.** Inf. xx. 110.
- Calucci.** Par. xvi. 106.
- Calixtus.** Par. xxvii. 44.
- Callaroga.** Par. xii. 52.
- Calliope.** Purg. i. 9 (*v.l.* Calliopea). [Muses.]
- Callisto.**] Purg. xxv. 131; Par. xxxi. 32.
- Calzolaio di Parma, Il.** [Asdente.]
- Camaldoli.**] Purg. v. 96.
- Camicion de' Pazzi.** Inf. xxxii. 68;—xxxii. 52-69.
- Camilla.** Inf. i. 107; iv. 124.
- Cammino, Gherardo da.** Purg. xvi. 124, 133, 138.
- Cammino, Riccardo da.**] Par. ix. 49-51.
- Camonica, Val** (Valley of River Oglio). Inf. xx. 65.
- Campagnatico.** Purg. xi. 66.
- Campaldino.** Purg. v. 92.
- Campi.** Par. xvi. 50.
- Campo Piceno.** Inf. xxiv. 148.
- Campo di Siena.** Purg. xi. 134.
- Can Grande della Scala.**] Inf. i. 101; Purg. xxxiii. 43; Par. xvii. 76-93.
- Canavese.** Purg. vii. 136.
- Cancellieri.**] Inf. xxxii. 63.
- Cancellieri, Focaccia de'.** [Focaccia.]
- Cancer.** Par. xxv. 101.
- Cannae.**] Inf. xxviii. 10-12.
- Capaneus.** Inf. xiv. 63;—xiv. 46, 68-70; xxv. 15.
- Capet, Hugh.** Purg. xx. 49;—xx. 30, 31, 124.
- Capets.**] Purg. xx. 43.
- Capocchio.** Inf. xxix. 136; xxx. 28;—xxix. 124.
- Caponsacco.** Par. xvi. 121.
- Caprara.** Inf. xxxiii. 82.
- Capricorn.** Purg. ii. 57; **Goat's horn.** Par. xxvii. 69.
- Caprona.** Inf. xxi. 95.
- Capulets.** Purg. vi. 106.
- Cardinal, The, Ottaviano degli Ubaldini.** Inf. x. 120.
- Carignano, Angiolello da.** [Angiolello.]
- Carinthia.** Inf. xv. 7-9.
- Carisenda.** Inf. xxxi. 136.
- Carlino de' Pazzi.** Inf. xxxii. 69.
- Carlovingians.**] Purg. xx. 53.
- Carnaro.** [Quarnaro.]
- Carp, The.** Purg. xxxii. 54.
- Carpigna.** Purg. xiv. 98.
- Carrarese.** Inf. xx. 48.
- Carthaginians.**] Inf. xxviii. 10.
- Casale.** Par. xii. 124.
- Casalodi.** Inf. xx. 95.
- Casella.** Purg. ii. 91.
- Casentinese.**] Purg. xiv. 43.
- Casentino.** Inf. xxx. 65; Purg. v. 94;—v. 115, 116; xiv. 43.
- Cassero, Guido del.**] Inf. xxviii. 77.
- Cassero, Jacopo del.**] Purg. v. 64-84.

- Cassino, Monte.** Par. xxii. 37;—xxii. 76.
Cassius. Inf. xxxiv. 67; Par. vi. 74.
Castalia.] Purg. xxxi. 141.
Castel Sant' Angelo, Ponte di.] Inf. xviii. 29.
Castello, Guido da. Purg. xvi. 125-6.
Castello, Sant' Angelo.] Inf. xviii. 32.
Castile. Par. xii. 49-54.
Castor. Purg. iv. 61. [*Gemini.*]
Castrocaro. Purg. xiv. 116.
Catalano de' Catalani. Inf. xxiii. 104, 114.
Catalano de' Malavolti. [Catalano.]
Catalonia. Par. viii. 77.
Catania, Gulf of.] Par. viii. 68, 69.
Catellini. Par. xvi. 88.
Cato, Marcus. Inf. xiv. 15;—Purg. i. 31, 73, 133; ii. 119.
Catona. Par. viii. 62 (*v.l.* Crotona).
Catria. Par. xxi. 109.
Cattolica, La. Inf. xxviii. 80.
Caurus. Inf. xi. 114.
Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti.] Inf. x. 53, 110.
Cavalcanti, Francesco de'.] Inf. xxv. 35, 83, 151.
Cavalcanti, Gianni Schicchi de'. [Gianni Schicchi.]
Cavalcanti, Guido. Inf. x. 63;—Inf. vi. 73; x. 60, 111; Purg. xi. 97.
Cecina. Inf. xiii. 9.
Celestine V.] Inf. iii. 59, 60; xix. 56; xxvii. 105.
Centaur. Inf. xii. 56, 104, 115, 129; xxv. 17;—xii. 76; xxv. 38; Purg. xxiv. 121-3.
Centre of the Earth. Inf. xxxiv. 107;—Inf. xxxii. 73, 74; xxxiv. 110, 111.
Ceperano. Inf. xxviii. 16.
Cephas. Par. xxi. 127. [*Peter*¹.]
Cepperano. [Ceperano.]
Cerberus. Inf. vi. 13, 22, 32; ix. 98.
Cerchi. Par. xvi. 65;—xvi. 94-8.
Ceres.] Purg. xxviii. 49-51.
Certaldo. Par. xvi. 50.
Cervia. Inf. xxvii. 42.
Cesena.] Inf. xxvii. 52.
Ceuta. Inf. xxvi. 111.
Chaos. Inf. xii. 43.
Charlemagne. Inf. xxxi. 17; Par. vi. 94; xviii. 43.
Charles I, King of Naples. Inf. xix. 99; Purg. xi. 137; xx. 67;—Purg. vii. 113, 124, 127; Par. vi. 108.
Charles II, King of Naples. Purg. v. 69; Par. viii. 72; xx. 63;
the younger Charles. Par. vi. 106; **the Cripple of Jerusalem.** Par. xix. 127;—Purg. vii. 127; xx. 79; Par. viii. 82.
Charles Martel. Par. ix. 1;—viii. 31; ix. 7.
Charles of Hungary. Par. viii. 72; ix. 6.
Charles of Lorraine. Purg. xx. 53-60.
Charles of Valois. Purg. xx. 71.
Charon. Inf. iii. 94, 109, 128;—iii. 83, 98, 109.
Charybdis. Inf. vii. 22.
Cherubim. Inf. xxvii. 113; Par. xxviii. 99.
Chiana. Par. xiii. 23.
Chiana, Val di. [Valdichiana.]
Chiara, Santa.] Par. iii. 98, 99.
Chiaramontesi.] Purg. xii. 105; Par. xvi. 105.
Chiarentana. Inf. xv. 9.
Chiascio. [Chiassi².]
Chiassi¹. Harbour of Ravenna. Purg. xxviii. 20.
Chiassi².] Stream in Umbria. Par. xi. 43, 44.
Chiaveri. Purg. xix. 120 (*v.l.* Chia-vari).
Chiron. Inf. xii. 65, 71, 77, 97; Purg. ix. 37.
Chiusi. Par. xvi. 75.
Christ. Purg. xx. 87; xxi. 8; xxiii. 74; xxvi. 129; xxxii. 102; Par. vi. 14; ix. 120; xi. 72, 102, 107; xii. 37, 71, 73, 75; xiv. 104, 106, 108; xvii. 51; xix. 72, 104, 106, 108; xx. 47; xxiii. 20, 72; xxv. 15; xxvi. 53; xxvii. 40; xxix. 98, 109; xxxi. 3, 107; xxxii. 20, 24, 27, 83, 85, 87, 125; **Jesus.** Par. xxv. 33; **Jesus Christ.** Par. xxxi. 107; **Abbot.** Purg. xxvi. 129; **Crucified One.** Purg. vi. 119 (*cf.* Inf. xii. 38, 39; Purg. xxxiii. 63; Par. xi. 31-3; xiii. 40-2); **Delight.** Par. xi. 31; xiii. 111; **Desire.** Par. xxiii. 105; **Emperor.** Par. xxv. 41; **Gardener.** Par. xxvi. 65; **Gryphon.** Purg. xxix. 108; xxx. 8;

Christ—contd.

xxx. 80, 113, 120, 122; xxxii. 26, 43, 47, 89, 96; (cf. Par. ii. 41, 42; vi. 13-21; vii. 35, 36; xiii. 26, 27; xxxiii. 136; xxxiii. 4-6); **Judge.** Inf. vi. 96; **Lamb.** Purg. xvi. 18; Par. xvii. 33; xxiv. 2; **Lamb of God.** Purg. xvi. 19; **Light.** Par. xiii. 55; xxxii. 31; xxxiii. 119, 125; **Lord.** Inf. xix. 91; Purg. xx. 94; Par. xxiv. 35; xxxi. 107; **Man.** Inf. xxxiv. 115; **Master.** Purg. xxxii. 81; **Pelican.** Par. xxv. 113; **Power.** Par. xxxii. 37; xxvii. 36. **Powerful One.** Inf. iv. 53; **Roman.** Purg. xxxii. 102; **Son.** Par. x. 1; xxxiii. 136; **Son of God.** Par. vii. 119; xxvii. 24; xxxii. 113; **Son of Mary.** Purg. xv. 89; Par. xxxii. 137 (cf. Purg. xx. 24; Par. xxxiii. 120); **Spouse.** Par. iii. 101 (cf. xi. 31-3); **Sun.** Par. xxxii. 29, 72; **Truth.** Par. xxii. 41, 42; xxxi. 107; **Way.** Par. xviii. 6; xx. 114; **Wisdom.** Inf. iii. 6; Par. xxxii. 37; **Word.** Par. vii. 30; xxxiii. 73.

Christ, Crucifixion of. [Crucifixion.]

Christ, Garden of. [Church, Holy.]

Christ, Resurrection of. Purg. xxi. 9; Par. xxiv. 126.

Christ, Spouse of. [Church, Holy.]

Christ, Transfiguration of. [Transfiguration.]

Christians. Inf. xxvii. 88; Purg. x. 121; xxii. 73, 90; Par. v. 73; xv. 135; xix. 109; xx. 104; xxiv. 52; xxvii. 48;—Purg. xxii. 80; Par. xii. 37, 41; xxvii. 48, 51.

Chrysostom, St. Par. xii. 137.

Church, Holy. Purg. iii. 137; xxiv. 22; Par. iv. 46; v. 35, 77; vi. 22, 95; x. 108; xxii. 82; xxv. 52; xxxii. 125; **Spouse of God.** Par. x. 140; **Spouse of Christ.** Par. xi. 32; xii. 43; xxvii. 40; xxxi. 3; xxxii. 128; **Lady.** Inf. xix. 57;—**Army of Christ.** Par. xii. 37; **Garden of Christ.** Par. xii. 72, 104; xxvi. 64; **Vine.** Par. xviii. 132; **Bark of Peter.** Par. xi. 119; **little Bark.** Purg. xxxii. 129;—**Church of Rome.** Purg. xvi. 127; **the Seat.** Par. xii. 88, 89; **Imperial Court.** Par. xxv. 30;—

Charlot, Wain. Purg. xxix. 107, 151; xxx. 9, 61, 101; xxxii. 24, 104, 115, 126, 132; **Car.** Purg. xxx. 16; **holy Structure.** Purg. xxxii. 142; **Vessel.** Purg. xxxiii. 34. [Rome³.]

Ciacco. Inf. vi. 52, 58;—vi. 38, 55.

Ciacco de' Tarlati. Purg. vi. 15.

Ciampolo. Inf. xxii. 32, 44, 47, 48, 58, 77, 98, 121, 128, 135, 136.

Cianfa. Inf. xxv. 43.

Cianghella. Par. xv. 128.

Cicero. Inf. iv. 141.

Cieldauro. Par. x. 128.

Cimabue. Purg. xi. 94.

Cincinnatus. Par. xv. 129; **Quintus.** Par. vi. 46.

Cinyras. Inf. xxx. 39.

Cione de' Tarlati. Purg. vi. 15.

Circe. Inf. xxvi. 91; Purg. xiv. 42.

Ciriatto. Inf. xxi. 122; xxii. 55.

Cirra. Par. i. 36.

Clare, Saint. Par. iii. 97-104.

Clemence. Par. ix. 1.

Clement IV. Purg. iii. 125.

Clement V. Inf. xix. 83, 85; Purg. xxxii. 149; xxxiii. 44; Par. xvii. 82; xxvii. 58; xxx. 143.

Cleopatra. Inf. v. 63; Par. vi. 76.

Cleophas. Purg. xxi. 8.

Cletus. Par. xxvii. 41.

Clio. Purg. xxii. 58. [Muses.]

Clotho. Purg. xxi. 27.

Cluny. Inf. xxxiii. 63 (*v.l.* Cologna).

Clymene. Par. xvii. 1.

Cocytus. Inf. xiv. 119; xxxi. 123; xxxiii. 156; xxxiv. 52;—xxxii. 23,

35, 60, 72, 117; xxxiii. 91, 109; xxxiv. 29, 75.

Colchians. Inf. xviii. 87.

Colchis. Par. ii. 16.

Colle. Purg. xiii. 115.

Cologna, Alberto di. [Albert of Cologne.]

Cologne. Inf. xxxiii. 63 (*v.l.* Clugni); Par. x. 99.

Colonna family. Inf. xxvii. 86.

Colonna, Sciarra. Purg. xx. 90.

Colonne, Guido delle. Purg. xi. 97.

Comestor, Petrus. [Peter Mangiadore.]

Commedia, the D. C. Inf. xvi. 128; xxi. 2; **sacrato Poema.** Par. xxxii. 62; **Poema sacro.** Par. xxv. 1.

Commentator. [Averroës.]

Conio. Purg. xiv. 116.

- Conrad III.** Par. xv. 139.
Conrad Malaspina. Purg. viii. 65, 118.
Conrad Malaspina], the elder. Purg. viii. 119.
Conrad of Palazzo. Purg. xvi. 124.
Conradin. Purg. xx. 68.
Constance¹, wife of Emperor Henry VI. Purg. iii. 113; Par. iii. 118; iv. 98;—Par. iii. 109, 113, 118.
Constance², wife of Peter III of Aragon. Purg. iii. 143;—iii. 115.
Constantine. Inf. xix. 115; xxvii. 94; Par. vi. 1;—Purg. xxxii. 124-6; Par. xx. 55-7.
Constantine, Donation of. [Donation.]
Constantinople. Par. vi. 5.
Contemplative Spirits.] Par. xxi-xxii. 99.
Cordelier. Inf. xxvii. 67.
Cordeliers. [Franciscans.]
Cornelia. Inf. iv. 128; Par. xv. 129.
Corneto. Inf. xii. 137; xiii. 9.
Corneto, Rinier da. Inf. xii. 137.
Coriscans. Purg. xviii. 81.
Corso Donati.] Purg. xxiv. 82; Par. iii. 106, 107; xv. 107.
Corybantes.] Inf. xiv. 102.
Cosenza. Purg. iii. 124.
Cosenza, Pastor of. [Pignatello, Bartolommeo or perhaps Tommaso d'Agni.]
Counsellors of evil.] Inf. xxvi. 31-xxvii. 132.
Cowardy, The.] Inf. iii. 21-69.
Crassus. Purg. xx. 116.
Crete. Inf. xii. 12; xiv. 95.
Crete, Infamy of. Inf. xii. 12. [Minotaur.]
Crete, King of. Inf. xiv. 96. [Saturn¹.]
Crete, Old Man of.] Inf. xiv. 103-14.
Creusa. Par. ix. 98.
Cripple of Jerusalem, The [Charles II.]
Croatia. Par. xxxi. 103.
Crotona. Par. viii. 62 (*v.l.* Catona).
Crown of Ariadne, constellation. Par. xiii. 13-15.
Crucifixion of Christ.] Inf. xxiii. 117; xxxiv. 114, 115; Purg. vi. 119; xx. 88-90; xxiii. 74; xxxiii. 6, 63; Par. vi. 90; vii. 20, 47, 48, 57; xi. 32, 72; xii. 37, 38; xiii. 41; xiv. 104-8; xix. 105; xxv. 114; xxvi. 59; xxix. 98; xxxi. 3.
Crusade], the second. Par. xv. 139-48.
Cubs. Family of Nicholas III. Inf. xix. 71.
Cunizza. Par. ix. 32;—ix. 13, 20, 22.
Cupid. Par. viii. 7;—Par. viii. 8.
Curiatii.] Par. vi. 39.
Curio. Inf. xxviii. 102;—xxviii. 86, 93, 95-7.
Cyclopes.] Inf. xiv. 55.
Cyprian. Par. viii. 2.
Cyprus. Inf. xxviii. 82; Par. xix. 146.
Cyrus. Purg. xii. 56.
Cythrea. Purg. xxvii. 95.
Daedalus. Inf. xxix. 116;—xvii. 111; Par. viii. 125, 126.
Damian, Peter. Par. xxi. 121;—Par. xxi. 43, 55, 73, 80, 82, 122, 139.
Damiata. Inf. xv. 104.
Daniel. Purg. xxii. 146; Par. iv. 13; xxix. 134.
Daniel, Arnaut. Purg. xxvi. 142.
Dante. Purg. xxx. 55.
Dante, Mother of. Inf. viii. 45.
Danube. Inf. xxxii. 26; Par. viii. 65.
Daphne. Par. i. 32, 33.
Dati, Bonturo.] Inf. xxi. 41.
David. Inf. iv. 58; xxviii. 138; Psalmist. Purg. x. 65; Singer. Par. xx. 38; xxv. 72; xxxii. 11.
Decl. Par. vi. 47.
Decretalists.] Par. ix. 134; xii. 83.
Decretals. Par. ix. 134.
Deianira. Inf. xii. 68.
Deidamia. Inf. xxvi. 62; Purg. xxii. 114.
Deiphyle. Purg. xxii. 110.
Delia. Purg. xxix. 78. [Diana¹.]
Della Bella.] Par. xvi. 131.
Della Pera. Par. xvi. 126.
Della Pressa. Par. xvi. 100.
Della Sannella. Par. xvi. 92.
Delos. Purg. xx. 130.
Delphic delty. Par. i. 32. [Apollo.]
Democritus. Inf. iv. 136.
Demon, The. Purg. xiv. 118. [Mainardo.]
Demophoon. Par. ix. 101.

- Dente, Vitallano del.] Inf. xvii. 68.
- Desiderius.] Par. vi. 94.
- Devil. Inf. xxxi. 143. [Lucifer.]
- Diana¹, goddess. Purg. xxv. 131; Delia. Purg. xxix. 78; Trivia. Par. xxiii. 26; daughter of Latona. Par. x. 67; xxii. 139; xxix. 1;—Inf. x. 80; Purg. xx. 132. [Moon.]
- Diana², river. Purg. xiii. 153.
- Dido. Inf. v. 85; Par. viii. 9;—Inf. v. 61; Par. ix. 97.
- Diogenes. Inf. iv. 137.
- Diomed. Inf. xxvi. 56;—xxvi. 75, 79.
- Dione. Par. viii. 7; xxii. 144;—viii. 8. [Venus².]
- Dionysius¹, tyrant of Syracuse. Inf. xii. 107.
- Dionysius² the Areopagite. Par. xxviii. 130;—Par. x. 115–17.
- Dionysius³, king of Portugal. Par. xix. 139.
- Dioscorides. Inf. iv. 140.
- Dis¹, Satan. Inf. xi. 65; xii. 39; xxxiv. 20. [Lucifer.]
- Dis², region of Hell. Inf. viii. 68;—viii. 77, 130; ix. 104; x. 2, 22; xi. 73. [Hell.]
- Dolcino, Fra. Inf. xxviii. 55.
- Dominations. Par. xxviii. 122.
- Dominic. Par. x. 95; xii. 70;—Par. xi. 35, 38, 39, 118–120, 121, 131, 137, 138; xii. 32, 34, 44, 55, 56, 71, 73, 85, 99, 106, 142.
- Dominicans.] Par. x. 94, 95; xi. 124, 127, 130, 137; xii. 103, 104.
- Domitian. Purg. xxii. 83.
- Don, river. Inf. xxxii. 27.
- Donati.] Par. iii. 106; xvi. 94–6.
- Donati, Buoso. Inf. xxx. 44.
- Donati, Clanfa.] Inf. xxv. 43.
- Donati, Corso. [Corso.]
- Donati, Forese. [Forese.]
- Donati, Piccarda. [Piccarda.]
- Donation of Constantine.] Inf. xix. 116; Purg. xxxii. 124–9; Par. xx. 55, 56.
- Donato, Ubertin. Par. xvi. 119.
- Donatus. Par. xii. 137.
- Doria, Branca. [Branca d'Oria.]
- Douay. Purg. xx. 46.
- Draghignazzo. Inf. xxi. 121; xxii. 73.
- Dragon, mystic. Purg. xxxii. 131–5; serpent. Purg. xxxiii. 34.
- Duera. Inf. xxxii. 116. [Buoso da Duera.]
- Durazzo. Par. vi. 65.
- DXV. Purg. xxxiii. 43.
- Eagle¹, imperial ensign. Purg. x. 80; xxxii. 125; xxxiii. 38; Par. vi. 1; bird of Jove. Purg. xxxii. 112; bird of God. Par. vi. 4; holy bird. Par. xvii. 72;—hallowed ensign. Par. vi. 32, 100; xix. 101; xx. 8, 86.
- Eagle², mystic. Purg. xxxii. 112–17, 125, 126; xxxiii. 38.
- Eagle³, symbol of Justice in the Heaven of Jupiter. Par. xviii. 70–xx.
- Earth¹, pagan goddess. Inf. xxxi. 121; Purg. xxix. 119.
- Earth², planet. Purg. xix. 3; xxix. 119;—Par. xxii. 135.
- Earth, Centre of. Inf. xxxii. 73, 74; xxxiv. 107, 110, 111.
- Earth, Shadow of the. Par. ix. 118; xxx. 3.
- Earth, Sons of. Inf. xxxi. 121. [Giants.]
- East. Inf. xvi. 95; Purg. i. 20; iv. 53; viii. 11; ix. 2; xix. 5; xxvii. 94; xxix. 12; Par. xi. 54;—(Par. v. 87).
- Ebro. Par. ix. 89; Ibero. Purg. xxvii. 3.
- Echo. Par. xii. 14, 15.
- Eclipse of the Sun. Par. ii. 80; xxvii. 35; xxix. 97–102.
- Edward I, of England. Purg. vii. 132; Par. xix. 122.
- Edward II, of England. Par. xix. 122.
- Egidius, of Assisi. Par. xi. 83.
- Egypt. Purg. ii. 46; Par. xxv. 55;—Inf. v. 60; xxiv. 90; xxvii. 90.
- El. Par. xxvi. 134 (*vv. ll. I. L.*), 136 (*v. l. Eli*).
- Elbe. Purg. vii. 99.
- Eleanor.] Par. vi. 133–4.
- Electra. Inf. iv. 121.
- Eli. Purg. xxiii. 74; Par. xxvi. 136 (*v. l. Eli*).
- Elijah. Inf. xxvi. 35; Purg. xxxii. 80.
- Elisabeth.] Purg. xviii. 100.
- Eliseo. Par. xv. 136.
- Elisha.] Inf. xxvi. 34.
- Elsa. Purg. xxxiii. 67.
- Elysium. Par. xv. 27.
- Ema. Par. xvi. 143.
- Emmaus.] Purg. xxi. 7–9.

- Emme.** [M².]
Empedocles. Inf. iv. 138;—xii. 42, 43.
Emperor¹, of the Roman Empire. Purg. x. 76; Caesar. Par. vi. 86; Roman Prince. Purg. x. 74.
Emperor², of the Holy Roman Empire. Purg. vii. 94; Par. xv. 139; Caesar. Inf. xiii. 75; Purg. vi. 92, 114; Par. i. 29; xvi. 59.
Emperor³, of Byzantium. Par. vi. 10; xx. 57; Constantine. Par. xx. 57; Justinian. Purg. vi. 89; Par. vi. 10.
Emperors of the Roman Empire. [Augustus¹], [Constantine], Domitian. Purg. xxii. 83; Julius Caesar [Caesar, Julius], Tiberius.] Par. vi. 86; Titus. Purg. xxi. 82; Par. vi. 92; Trajan. Purg. x. 76;—x. 74-93; Par. xx. 44, 45, 100, 106-17.
Emperors of the West (after 1155 of the Holy Roman Empire). Albert I [Albert]. Charles I [Charles]. Conrad III. [Conrad]. Henry VI [Henry]. Henry VII [Henry]. Frederick I [Frederick]. Frederick II [Frederick]. Rudolf I [Rudolf].
Empyrean. [Heaven.]
England. Purg. vii. 131.
Englishman. Par. xix. 122.
Enrico di Susa. [Ostiense.]
Envious, The.] Purg. xiii. 46-72.
Ephialtes. Inf. xxxi. 94, 108;—xxxii. 84, 91, 104.
Epicureans.] Inf. x. 14.
Epicurus. Inf. x. 14.
Epicycle of Venus. Par. viii. 3.
Equator. Purg. iv. 79, 80; mid-circle. Purg. iv. 79;—Par. x. 19.
Equinox.] Inf. xxiv. 3; Par. i. 38, 39.
Eric], King of Norway. (Par. xix. 139.)
Erichtho. Inf. ix. 23.
Erinyes. Inf. ix. 45;—ix. 38, 43, 44, 91.
Eriphyle.] Purg. xii. 50; Par. iv. 104.
Erysichthon. Purg. xxiii. 26.
Esau. Par. viii. 130;—xxxii. 68; (Inf. iii. 59, 60.)
Este. [Esti.]
Esther. Purg. xvii. 29.
Esti. Inf. xii. 111; Purg. v. 77.
Esti, Beatrice da. [Beatrice⁴.]
Esti, Obizzo da. [Obizzo.]
Eteocles. Inf. xxvi. 54;—Purg. xxii. 56.
Ethics, of Aristotle Inf. xi. 80.
Ethiopia. Inf. xxiv. 89;—xxxiv. 45.
Ethiopian.] Inf. xxxiv. 44, 45; Purg. xxvi. 21; Par. xix. 109.
Etna. [Aetna.]
Euclid. Inf. iv. 142.
Euneos], son of Hypsipile. Purg. xxvi. 95.
Eunoë. Purg. xxviii. 131; xxxiii. 127;—xxxiii. 116, 142.
Euphrates. Purg. xxxiii. 112.
Euripides. Purg. xxii. 106.
Europa. Par. xxvii. 84.
Europe. Purg. viii. 123; Par. vi. 5; xii. 48.
Eurus. Par. viii. 69.
Euryalus. Inf. i. 108.
Eurypylus. Inf. xx. 112.
Evangelists.] Purg. xxix. 92-106.
Eve. Purg. viii. 99; xii. 71; xxiv. 116; xxix. 24;—Purg. i. 24; xxx. 52; xxxii. 32; Par. vii. 148; xiii. 37.
Ezekiel. Par. xxix. 100.
Ezzolino. [Azzolino.]
Fabbro Lambertaccio. Purg. xiv. 100.
Fabii. Par. vi. 47.
Fable of Aesop. Inf. xxiii. 4.
Fabricius. Purg. xx. 25.
Face, The Holy. Inf. xxi. 48.
Faenza. Inf. xxxii. 123; Purg. xiv. 101;—Inf. xxvii. 49.
Faenza, Tommaso da. [Thomas².]
Falsifiers. Inf. xxix. 40-xxx. 148.
Falterona. Purg. xiv. 17.
Famagusta. Par. xix. 146.
Fano. Inf. xxviii. 76; Purg. v. 71.
Fantolini, Ugolin de'. Purg. xiv. 121.
Farfarello. Inf. xxi. 123; xxii. 94.
Farinata degli Scornigiani.] Purg. vi. 17.
Farinata degli Uberti. Inf. vi. 79; x. 32;—x. 73, 116.
Fazio da Certaldo.] (Par. xvi. 50.)
Fazio da Signa.] Par. xvi. 56.
Felix. Par. xii. 79.
Feltro¹, Feltre. Inf. i. 105; Par. ix. 52.

- Feltro**², Montefeltro. Inf. i. 105.
Fernando, Ferdinand], of Castile. 125.
Ferrarese. Par. ix. 56.
Fidanza, Giovanni. [Bona-ventura.]
Fieschi, Alagia de'. [Alagia.]
Fieschi, Bonifazio de'. [Bonifazio.]
Fieschi, Ottobuono de'. [Adrian V.]
Fiesolan beasts. Inf. xv. 73. [Florentines.]
Fiesole. Inf. xv. 62, 73; Par. xv. 126; xvi. 122;—Inf. xv. 63; Par. vi. 53.
Fifanti. Par. xvi. 104.
Figline. Par. xvi. 50.
Filippeschi. Purg. vi. 107.
Filippi. Par. xvi. 89.
Fisherman, The. Purg. xxii. 63; Par. xviii. 136.
Fixed stars. [Stars.]
Flanders.] Inf. xv. 4; Purg. xx. 46.
Flatterers.] Inf. xviii. 100–36.
Flemings. Inf. xv. 4.
Florence. Inf. x. 92; xvi. 75; xxiv. 144; xxvi. 1; xxxii. 120; Purg. vi. 127; xx. 75; Par. xv. 97; xvi. 84, 111, 146, 149; xvii. 48; xxix. 103; xxxi. 39;—Inf. vi. 49, 61; x. 26; xiii. 143; xv. 78; xvi. 9; xxiii. 95; Purg. xii. 102; xiv. 64; xxiii. 96; xxiv. 79; Par. vi. 53; ix. 127; xv. 110, 132; xvi. 25; xxv. 5.
Florentine. Inf. viii. 62; xxiii. 11; Par. xvi. 61.
Florentine women. Purg. xxiii. 101;—Par. xv. 97–113.
Florentines. Inf. xvii. 70; Par. xvi. 86; the rabidness of Florence. Purg. xi. 113; Fiesolan beasts. Inf. xv. 73.
Focaccia. Inf. xxxii. 63.
Focara. Inf. xxviii. 89.
Folco. Par. ix. 94;—Par. ix. 37, 67, 74.
Fonte Avellana.] Par. xxi. 110.
Fonte Branda. Inf. xxx. 78.
Foraboschi.] (Par. xvi. 110.)
Forese Donati. Purg. xxiii. 48, 76; xxiv. 74;—Purg. xxiii. 41.
Forlì. Inf. xvi. 99; Purg. xxiv. 32.
Fortune. Inf. vii. 62, 68; xiii. 98; xv. 46, 70, 93, 95; xxx. 13, 146; xxxii. 76; Purg. xxvi. 36; Par. viii. 139; xii. 92; xvi. 84; xvii. 26; xxvii. 145;—Inf. vii. 91.
Fortune, The Greater. Purg. xix. 4.
Fosco, Bernardin di. Purg. xiv. 101.
Four Animals. Purg. xxix. 92–106.
Four Elders. Purg. xxix. 142, 145–8.
Four Ladies. Purg. xxix. 130–2; xxxi. 104–17; xxxii. 25, 98; xxxiii. 2, 3, 7, 11, 13, 109.
Four Stars. Purg. i. 22; viii. 91.
Fra Alberigo. Inf. xxxiii. 118.
Fra Dolcino. Inf. xxviii. 55.
France. Inf. xix. 87; Purg. vii. 109; xx. 51, 71; Par. xv. 120.
France, Plague of. Purg. vii. 109. [Philip².]
Francesca. Inf. v. 116;—v. 74, 79, 80, 109, 114, 139.
Francesco d'Accorso. Inf. xv. 110.
Francesco Guercio Cavalcanti.] Inf. xxv. 35, 83, 151.
Francis of Assisi. Inf. xxvii. 112; Par. xi. 74; xxii. 90; xxxii. 35;—Par. xi. 35, 37, 40, 50, 58, 66, 84, 85, 89, 95, 99; xii. 34, 44, 110; xiii. 33.
Franciscans.] Inf. xxiii. 3; xxvii. 92, 93; Par. xi. 86, 87, 94; xii. 115, 131, 132.
Franco of Bologna. Purg. xi. 83.
Fraudulent, The. Inf. xi. 27;—xviii–xxx.
Fraudulent counsellors. Inf. xxvi. 31–xxvii. 132.
Frederick I, Emperor. Purg. xviii. 119. [Barbarossa.]
Frederick II¹, Emperor. Inf. x. 119; xiii. 59; xxiii. 66; Purg. xvi. 117; Caesar. Inf. xiii. 65;
Augustus. Inf. xiii. 68;—Par. iii. 120.
Frederick II², King of Sicily. Purg. vii. 119; Par. xx. 63;—Purg. iii. 116; Par. viii. 67; xix. 131.
Frederick Novello. Purg. vi. 17.
Frederick Tignoso. Purg. xiv. 106.
French, the. Inf. xxvii. 44; xxix. 123; xxxii. 115; Purg. xvi. 126.
Friars. Inf. xxiii. 3, 103.
Frisians. Inf. xxxi. 64.
Fucci, Vanni. Inf. xxiv. 125;—xxiv. 97, 118, 125, 126, 129, 130; xxv. 1, 16, 18.

- Fulcieri da Calboli.] Purg.** xiv. 58.
Furies. Inf. ix. 38. [*Erinyes.*]
Gabriel. Par. iv. 47; ix. 138;—Purg. x. 34, 35; Par. xiv. 36; xxiii. 94, 103; xxxii. 94, 95, 103, 110, 112, 113.
Gaddo. Inf. xxxiii. 68;—xxxiii. 90.
Gaeta. Inf. xxvi. 92; Par. viii. 62.
Gaia. Purg. xvi. 140.
Galaxy. Par. xiv. 99;—Inf. xvii. 107, 108.
Galeazzo Visconti.] Purg. viii. 80.
Galen. Inf. iv. 143.
Galeotto. [*Gallehaut.*]
Galicia. Par. xxv. 18.
Galigalo. Par. xvi. 101.
Gallehaut. Inf. v. 137.
Galli. Par. xvi. 105.
Gallura. Inf. xxii. 82; Purg. viii. 81.
Galluzzo. Par. xvi. 53.
Ganelon. Inf. xxxii. 122.
Gangalandi.] Par. xvi. 128.
Ganges. Purg. ii. 5; xxvii. 4; Par. xi. 51.
Ganymede. Purg. ix. 23.
Garda, Lago di. [*Benaco.*]
Garden of Christ. [*Church, Holy.*]
Gardener, The Eternal. Par. xxvi. 65. [*God.*]
Gardingo. Inf. xxiii. 108.
Garisenda. [*Carisenda.*]
Gascon. Par. xvii. 82; xxvii. 58 (Pope Clement V).
Gascony. Purg. xx. 66.
Gaville. Inf. xxv. 151.
Gemini. Par. xxii. 152;—Inf. xv. 55; xxvi. 23; Purg. iv. 61; Par. xxii. 110–12; xxvii. 98.
Genesis. Inf. xi. 107.
Genoese. Inf. xxxiii. 151; Par. ix. 90.
Gentiles. Par. xx. 104;—xvii. 31; xxii. 39.
Gentucca. Purg. xxiv. 37.
Geomancers. Purg. xix. 4.
Geometer. Par. xxxiii. 133.
Geri del Bello. Inf. xxix. 27.
German Albert. Purg. vi. 97. [*Albert I.*]
German Ocean. Inf. xv. 6; Purg. vii. 99.
Germans. Inf. xvii. 21; Purg. vi. 97; Par. viii. 66.
Germany. Inf. xx. 62.
Geryon. Inf. xvii. 97, 113; xviii. 20; Purg. xxvii. 23;—Inf. xvi. 131, 132; xvii. 1, 3, 7, 23, 30.
Ghent. Purg. xx. 46.
Gherardesca, Anselmuccio della. Inf. xxxiii. 50.
Gherardesca, Brigata della. Inf. xxxiii. 89.
Gherardesca, Gaddo della. Inf. xxxiii. 68.
Gherardesca, Ugolino della. Inf. xxxiii. 13, 85. [*Ugolino, Count.*]
Gherardesca, Uguccone della. Inf. xxxiii. 89.
Gherardo da Cammino. [*Cammino.*]
Ghibellines. Par. vi. 103;—Inf. x. 47, 51; Purg. xi. 112; Par. vi. 101; xvi. 154; xxvii. 48.
Ghin di Tacco. Purg. vi. 14.
Ghisolabella. Inf. xviii. 55.
Gianciotto Malatesta.] Inf. v. 107.
Giandonati.] Par. xvi. 127.
Gianfigliaccl.] Inf. xvii. 59.
Gianni Schicchi. Inf. xxx. 32;—xxx. 25, 28, 42–5, 46, 47.
Gianni de' Soldanier. Inf. xxxii. 121.
Giano della Bella.] (Par. xvi. 132.)
Giant, mystic. Purg. xxxii. 152–60; xxxiii. 45. [*Philip².*]
Giants. Inf. xxxi. 31, 44, 95; xxxiv. 31; Purg. xii. 33;—Inf. xxxi. 121.
Gibraltar, Straits of.] Inf. xxvi. 107.
Gideon. Purg. xxiv. 125.
Gilboa. Purg. xii. 41.
Giles, Brother, of Assisi. Par. xi. 83.
Giotto. Purg. xi. 95.
Giovanna. [*Joan.*]
Giovanni Bulamonte.] Inf. xvii. 72.
Giraut de Borneil.] Purg. xxvi. 120.
Girolamo. [*Jerome.*]
Giuliano, Monte San.] Inf. xxxiii. 29.
Giuchoi. Par. xvi. 104.
Giuseppe della Scala.] Purg. xviii. 124–5.
Glaucus. Par. i. 68.

- Gluttonous, the.** Inf. vi. 7-99; Purg. xxii. 130-xxiv. 154.
- God.** Inf. ²⁸; Purg. ⁴⁵; Par. ⁶³;
- Alpha and Omega.** Par. xxvi. 17; **Author.** Par. xxvi. 40;
- Benignity.** Par. vii. 143; **Creator.** Purg. xvii. 91; Par. xxx. 101;
- Emperor.** Inf. i. 124; Par. xii. 40; xxv. 41; **Equality.** Par. xv. 74; **Essence.** Purg. xvii. 134; Par. xxi. 87; xxiv. 140; xxvi. 31;
- Father.** Purg. xi. 1; Par. x. 50; xviii. 129; xxvii. 1; **Fountain.** Par. iv. 116; xxiv. 9; **Gardener.** Par. xxvi. 65; **Good.** Purg. xv. 67; xxviii. 91; xxxi. 23; Par. iii. 90; vii. 80; viii. 97; ix. 9, 11, 107; xiv. 47; xviii. 99; xix. 50, 87; xxvi. 16, 134; **Goodness.** Inf. xi. 96; Purg. iii. 122; Par. vii. 64, 109;
- Guide.** Par. xxv. 72; **Jove.** Purg. vi. 118; **Judge.** Purg. viii. 109; xxxi. 29; **Justice.** Par. vi. 88, 121; xix. 29; **King.** Inf. v. 91; Purg. xix. 63; xxi. 83; Par. iii. 84; xxxii. 61;
- Light.** Inf. x. 102; Purg. xiii. 86; Par. iii. 32; v. 8; xi. 20; xiii. 56; xxix. 136; xxxi. 28; xxxiii. 43, 67, 83, 116, 124; **Lord.** Inf. ii. 73; Purg. xxi. 72; **Love.** Par. i. 74; x. 3; xiii. 79; xxvi. 38; xxix. 18; xxx. 52; xxxii. 142; xxxiii. 145;
- Lover.** Par. iv. 118; **Maker.** Inf. iii. 4; Par. vii. 31, 35; xxvi. 83; xxxiii. 5; **Mind.** Par. viii. 101; **Mirror.** Par. xv. 62; xxvi. 106; **Motor.** Purg. xxv. 70; **Omnipotence.** Inf. iii. 5; **Point.** Par. xvii. 17; xxviii. 41, 95;
- Power.** Par. xiii. 45; **Primal Soul.** Par. viii. 111; **Providence.** Inf. xxiii. 55; Par. i. 121; xi. 28; xxvii. 61; **Salvation.** Par. xxii. 124; xxxiii. 27; **Sea.** Par. iii. 86; **Serene.** Par. xix. 64; **Sire.** Inf. xxix. 56; Purg. xv. 112; xix. 125; Par. xxix. 28; **Star.** Par. xxxi. 28; **Sun.** Purg. vii. 26; Par. ix. 8; x. 53; xviii. 105; xxv. 54; xxx. 126; **Truth.** Par. iv. 96, 125; **Virtue.** Inf. v. 36; Purg. iii. 32; Par. xiii. 80; xxvi. 84; **Will.** Par. xix. 86; **Wisdom.** Inf. xix. 10; **Worth.** Purg. xv. 72; Par. i. 107; ix. 105; x. 3; xiii. 45; xxxiii. 81.
- Godfrey, Duke.** Par. xviii. 47.
- Gomita, Frate.** Inf. xxii. 81; —xxii. 82.
- Gomorrah.** Purg. xxvi. 40.
- Gorgon.** Inf. ix. 56; **Medusa.** Inf. ix. 52.
- Gorgona.** Inf. xxxiii. 82.
- Gospel.** Purg. xxii. 154; Par. ix. 133; xxiv. 137; xxix. 114;—Purg. xix. 136; Par. xxiv. 144. [*Bible.*]
- Governo.** Inf. xx. 76.
- Graffiaccane.** Inf. xxi. 122; xxii. 34. *Grammatica, the First Art.* Par. xii. 138;—Inf. iv. 106-11 (note).
- Gratian.** Par. x. 104.
- Greci.** Par. xvi. 89.
- Greece.** Inf. xx. 108.
- Greek.** Inf. xxx. 98, 122 [*Sinon*]; Purg. xxii. 101 [*Homer*]; Par. xx. 57 [*Constantine*].
- Greeks.** Inf. xxvi. 75; xxx. 98, 122; Purg. ix. 39; xxii. 88, 108; Par. v. 69.
- Gregory.** Purg. x. 75; Par. xxviii. 133;—Purg. xxix. 142; Par. xx. 108, 109.
- Greve's plain.** Par. xvi. 66. [*Valdigreve.*]
- Griffolino.** Inf. xxix. 109, 110; xxx. 31, 37. [*Aretine*¹.]
- Gryphon.** Purg. xxix. 108; xxx. 8; xxxi. 113, 120; xxxii. 26, 43, 89;—xxx. 80, 122; xxxii. 47, 96. [*Christ.*]
- Gualandi.** Inf. xxxiii. 32.
- Gualdo.** Par. xi. 48.
- Gualdrada.** Inf. xvi. 37.
- Gualterotti.** Par. xvi. 133.
- Gubbio.** Purg. xi. 80.
- Guelphs.** Par. vi. 107;—Inf. x. 46, 49; Purg. xi. 113; Par. vi. 100; xvi. 154; xxvii. 47.
- Guenevere.** Par. xvi. 15;—Inf. v. 128.
- Guercio Cavalcanti.** [*Cavalcanti, Francesco de'*.]
- Guerra, Guido.** [*Guido Guerra.*]
- Guidi, Counts.** Inf. xxx. 77; Purg. vi. 17; xiv. 43; Par. xvi. 64, 98.
- Guido Bonatti.** Inf. xx. 118.
- Guido Cavalcanti.** [*Cavalcanti, Guido.*]
- Guido, Count.** Par. xvi. 98. [*Guidi, Counts.*]
- Guido Guerra.** Inf. xvi. 38.
- Guido Guinicelli.** Purg. xxvi. 92; —Purg. xi. 97; xxvi. 97.
- Guido Montefeltrano.** Inf. xxvii. 4, 19-30, 33, 36, 61-129, 130.

- Guido Vecchio da Polenta.**] Inf. xxvii. 41.
Guido da Castel. Purg. xvi. 125.
Guido da Montefeltro. [Guido Montefeltro.]
Guido da Prata. Purg. xiv. 104.
Guido da Romena. Inf. xxx. 77.
Guido del Cassero. Inf. xxviii. 77.
Guido del Duca. Purg. xiv. 81;—xiv. 1-3, 10-15, 22-4, 28-66, 73, 74, 76-126, 127; xv. 44.
Guido delle Colonne.] Purg. xi. 97.
Guido di Carpigna. Purg. xiv. 98.
Guidoguerra. [Guido Guerra.]
Guillaume de Nogaret.] Purg. xx. 90.
Guinicelli, Guido. [Guido Guinicelli.]
Guiscard, Robert. Inf. xxviii. 14; Par. xviii. 48.
Guittone. Purg. xxiv. 56; xxvi. 124.
Guy de Monfort.] Inf. xii. 118, 119.
Hakon, King of Norway. Par. xix. 139.
Haman.] Purg. xvii. 26.
Hannibal. Inf. xxxi. 117; Par. vi. 50.
Harmonia.] Inf. xxv. 97; Purg. xii. 51.
Harpies. Inf. xiii. 10, 101.
Hautefort. Inf. xxix. 29.
Heaven, Crystalline. Primal Motion. Par. xxx. 107;—Inf. ix. 29; Purg. xxviii. 104; xxxiii. 90; Par. i. 123; ii. 113, 114; xiii. 24; xxiii. 112, 113; xxvii. 68, 99, 118; xxvii. 76-xxix. 145; xxviii. 14, 70, 71; xxx. 39.
Heaven, Eighth. [Heaven, Starry.]
Heaven, Empyrean. Inf. ii. 21;—Inf. ii. 84; Purg. xv. 52; xxvi. 63; xxx. 1; Par. i. 4, 122, 123; ii. 112; iv. 34; xxii. 62; xxiii. 102, 108; xxx. 39; xxx-xxxiii.
Heaven, Fifth. [Mars, Heaven of.]
Heaven, First. [Moon, Heaven of.]
Heaven, Fourth. [Sun, Heaven of.]
Heaven, Movers of the.] Par. ii. 127-9.
Heaven, Ninth. [Heaven, Crystalline.]
Heaven of Fixed Stars. [Heaven, Starry.]
Heaven, Second. [Mercury, Heaven of.]
Heaven, Seventh. [Saturn, Heaven of.]
Heaven, Sixth. [Jupiter, Heaven of.]
Heaven, Starry.] Purg. xi. 108; Par. ii. 64, 115, 130; xxii. 97-xxvii. 75.
Heaven, Tenth. [Heaven, Empyrean.]
Hebrew women. Par. xxxii. 7-18.
Hebrews. Purg. iv. 83; xxiv. 124; Par. v. 49; Israel. Purg. ii. 46;—Purg. xviii. 134; xxiii. 29; Par. xxxii. 132.
Hecate. Inf. x. 80. [Moon.]
Hector. Inf. iv. 122.
Hecuba. Inf. xxx. 16.
Helen of Troy. Inf. v. 64.
Helice. Purg. xxv. 131; Par. xxxi. 32.
Helicon. Purg. xxix. 40.
Heliodorus. Purg. xx. 113.
Helios. Par. xiv. 96.
Hell. Inf. i. 110; iii. 41; v. 10; vi. 40, 84; viii. 75; x. 36; xii. 35; xvi. 33; xviii. 1; xxv. 13; xxvi. 3; xxviii. 50; xxix. 96; xxxiv. 1, 81; Purg. i. 129; v. 104; vii. 21; xv. 1; xxi. 32; xxii. 14; Par. vi. 74; xx. 106; xxxi. 81; xxxii. 33—eternal dwelling. Inf. i. 114; city of woe. Inf. iii. 1; valley of the abyss of woe. Inf. iv. 8; blind world. Inf. iv. 13; xxvii. 25; abyss. Inf. iv. 24; xi. 5; xxxiv. 100; Purg. i. 46; where shines no light. Inf. iv. 151; woeful inn. Inf. v. 16; place of all light dumb. Inf. v. 28; town disconsolate. Inf. viii. 77; kingdom of the dead. Inf. viii. 85, 90; a land so black. Inf. viii. 93; the world below. Inf. viii. 108; grim tenements. Inf. viii. 120; dismal slope. Inf. ix. 16; city of fire. Inf. x. 22; blind prison. Inf. x. 59; Purg. xxii. 103; dark defile. Inf. xii. 86; place of gloom. Inf. xvi. 82; xxiv. 141; evil world. Inf. xix. 11; eternal exile. Inf. xxiii. 126; Purg. xxi. 18; gloomy jaws. Inf. xxiv. 123; grim world. Inf. xxx.

Hell—contd.

- 59; **bottom of all bad.** Inf. xxxi. 102; **dolorous realm.** Inf. xxxiv. 28; **cruel sea.** Purg. i. 3; **eternal prison.** Purg. i. 41; **profound night.** Purg. i. 44; xxiii. 122; **infernal valley.** Purg. i. 45; **world of woe.** Purg. vii. 22; **dismal caves.** Purg. viii. 58; **eternal pain.** Purg. xvi. 39; Par. xxvi. 133; **the never pardoning abyss.** Purg. xxiv. 84; **region of the dead.** Par. xvii. 21; **bitter world.** Par. xvii. 112; **vale of woe.** Par. xvii. 137; (**bitter life.**) Par. xx. 48; **nethermost pool of the world.** Par. xxxiii. 22. [**Dis.**]
- Hellespont.** Purg. xxviii. 71.
- Henry¹,** Henry VII, emperor. Par. xvii. 82; xxx. 137;—Purg. vi. 102; vii. 96.
- Henry²,** Prince Henry of England. Inf. xxviii. 135.
- Henry³,** Henry VI, emperor. Par. iii. 119.
- Henry⁴,** nephew of Henry III of England. Inf. xii. 119, 120.
- Henry⁵,** Henry I of Navarre. Purg. vii. 104, 109.
- Henry⁶,** Henry II of Cyprus. Par. xix. 147.
- Henry⁷,** Henry II of England. Inf. xxviii. 135.
- Henry of England, Henry III.** Purg. vii. 131.
- Heracitus.** Inf. iv. 138.
- Hercules.** Inf. xxv. 32; xxvi. 108; xxxi. 123; **Alcides.** Par. ix. 101; —Inf. ix. 98, 99; xii. 68.
- Hercules, Pillars of.** Inf. xxvi. 107-8.
- Heresiarchs.** Inf. ix. 127.
- Heretics.]** Inf. ix. 112-xi. 9.
- Hermaphrodite.** Purg. xxvi. 82.
- Hermitage.** Purg. v. 96 [**Camaldoli**]; Par. xxi. 110 [**Fonte Avellana**].
- Hero.** Purg. xxviii. 74.
- Herod.** Par. xviii. 135.
- Hezekiah.]** Par. xx. 49-51.
- Hierarchies.** Par. xvii. 121;—xxviii. 40-139.
- Hipodytus.** Par. xvii. 46.
- Hippocrates.** Inf. iv. 143; Purg. xxix. 137.
- Holofernes.** Purg. xii. 59.
- Homer.** Inf. iv. 88;—Purg. xx. 101.
- Honorius III.]** Par. xi. 98.
- Horace.** Inf. iv. 89.
- Horse, Trojan.]** Inf. xxvi. 59.
- Hound, The.** Inf. i. 101-11.
- Hugh Capet.** Purg. xx. 49;—xx. 30, 31, 124.
- Hugh of Brandenburg],** the great Baron. Par. xvi. 128.
- Hugh of St. Victor.** Par. xii. 133.
- Humbert.** Purg. xi. 67;—xi. 49-72, 74.
- Hungary.** Par. xix. 142;—viii. 65.
- Hyperion.** Par. xxii. 142.
- Hypocrites.** Inf. xxiii. 92;—xxiii. 58-144.
- Hypollitus.** Par. xvii. 46.
- Hypsipyle.** Inf. xviii. 92;—Purg. xxii. 112; xxvi. 95.
- I¹,** letter. Inf. xxiv. 100; Par. xviii. 78.
- I²,** cypher. Par. xix. 128.
- I³,** name of God. Par. xxvi. 134. (*v.l.* El, L.)
- Iarbus.** Purg. xxxi. 72.
- Iberia.** Inf. xxvi. 101.
- Ibero.** [**Ebro.**]
- Icarus.** Inf. xvii. 109;—Par. viii. 126.
- Ice.** Par. vii. 14. [**Beatrice¹.**]
- Ida¹,** mountain in Creta. Inf. xiv. 98.
- Ida²,** mountain in Phrygia. Purg. ix. 22.
- Ilium.** Inf. i. 75; Purg. xii. 62. [**Troy.**]
- Illuminato.** Par. xii. 130.
- Imola.]** Inf. xxvii. 49.
- Importuni.** Par. xvi. 133.
- India.** Inf. xiv. 32.
- Indian.** Purg. vii. 74.
- Indians.** Purg. xxvi. 21; xxxii. 41; Par. xxix. 101.
- Indus.** Par. xix. 71.
- Infangato.** Par. xvi. 123.
- Innocent III.** Par. xi. 92.
- Innocent IV.** (Inf. xix. 73.)
- Ino.]** Inf. xxx. 5, 8.
- Interminel, Alessio.** Inf. xviii. 122.
- Iole.** Par. ix. 102.
- Iphigenia.** Par. v. 70.
- Iris.** Par. xxxiii. 118; **daughter of Thamas.** Purg. xxi. 50; **hand-maid of Juno.** Par. xii. 12; **messenger of Juno.** Par. xxviii. 32;—Purg. xxix. 78.
- Isaac.]** Inf. iv. 59.

- Isaiah.** Par. xxv. 91.
Isère. Par. vi. 59.
Isidore. Par. x. 131.
Ismene. Purg. xxii. 111.
Ismenus. Purg. xviii. 91.
Israel¹, patriarch. Inf. iv. 59.
 [**Jacob.**]
Israel², people. Purg. ii. 46.
Italian. Par. ix. 26; xi. 105;
Latin. Inf. xxii. 65; xxvii. 27,
 33; xxviii. 71; xxix. 88, 91; Purg.
 xi. 58; xiii. 92.
Italy. Inf. i. 106; ix. 114; xx. 61;
 xxvii. 27; xxxiii. 80; Purg. vi. 76,
 124; vii. 95; xiii. 96; xx. 67; xxx.
 86; Par. ix. 25; xxi. 106; xxx.
 137; **Ausonia.** Par. viii. 61;
Latin country. Inf. xxvii. 27;
 xxviii. 71; garden of the Em-
 pire. Purg. vi. 105; fair country
 where the st doth sound. Inf.
 xxxiii. 80.
Jacob. Par. viii. 131; xxii. 71;
 Israel. Inf. iv. 59;—Par. xxxii.
 68.
Jacopo Rusticucci. Inf. vi. 80;
 xvi. 44.
Jacopo da Lentino. Purg. xxiv.
 56. [Notary, The.]
Jacopo da sant' Andrea.
 [**James**³.]
Jacopo del Cassero. Purg. v.
 64–84.
James¹, King of Aragon. Purg.
 vii. 119;—Purg. iii. 116; Par. xix.
 137.
James², King of the Balearic Isles.
 Par. xix. 137.
James³ of sant' Andrea. Inf.
 xiii. 133.
James⁴, St., the Apostle. Purg.
 xxxii. 76; **Baron.** Par. xxv. 17;
 Prince. Par. xxv. 23;—Par. xxv.
 22, 29, 33, 37, 48, 80, 107.
James⁵, St., the Less. Purg.
 xxix. 142.
Janiculus. Inf. xviii. 33.
January. Par. xxvii. 142.
Janus. Par. vi. 81.
Jason¹, leader of the Argonauts.
 Inf. xviii. 86; Par. ii. 18.
Jason², high priest. Inf. xix. 85.
Jehoshaphat. Inf. x. 11.
Jephthah. Par. v. 66.
Jericho. Par. ix. 124, 125.
Jerome. Par. xxix. 37.
Jerusalem. Purg. ii. 3; xxiii. 29;
 Par. xix. 127; xxv. 56; **Sion.**
 Purg. iv. 68;—Inf. xxxiv. 114;
 Purg. xxvii. 2.
Jerusalem, Cripple of.
 [**Charles II.**]
Jesus. Par. xxv. 33; **Jesus**
 Christ. Par. xxxi. 107.
Jews. Inf. xxiii. 123; xxvii. 87;
 Par. v. 81; vii. 47; xxix. 102.
Joachim of Flora. Par. xii. 140.
Joan¹, wife of Buonconte. Purg.
 v. 89.
Joan², daughter of Nino Visconti.
 Purg. viii. 71.
Joan³, mother of St. Dominic.
 Purg. xii. 80.
Jocasta. Purg. xxii. 56.
John¹, the Baptist. Inf. xix. 17;
 Par. iv. 29; xvi. 25; xxxii. 31;
 Baptist. Inf. xiii. 143; xxx. 74;
 Purg. xxii. 152; Par. xvi. 47;—
 Par. xviii. 134, 135. [**Baptistery.**]
John², Evangelist. Purg. xxix.
 105; xxxii. 76; Par. iv. 29; **the**
 Evangelist. Inf. xix. 106;—
 Purg. xxix. 92, 143; Par. xxiv.
 126; xxv. 32, 94, 100, 112, 113;
 xxvi. 53; xxxii. 127.
John XXI. [Peter of Spain.]
John XXII. Par. xxvii. 58;
 (xviii. 128–36).
Jordan. Purg. xviii. 135; Par.
 xxii. 94.
Joseph, the patriarch. Inf. xxx.
 97.
Joseph, St.] Purg. xv. 91.
Joshua. Purg. xx. 111; Par. ix.
 125; xviii. 38.
Jove¹, God. Purg. vi. 118.
Jove², pagan deity. Inf. xiv. 52;
 xxx. 45, 92; Purg. xxix. 120;
 xxxii. 112; Par. iv. 62;—Inf. xiv.
 101; Purg. xii. 32.
Jovial Friars. Inf. xxiii. 103.
Jovial radiance. Par. xviii. 70.
 [**Jupiter.**]
Juba. Par. vi. 70.
Jubilee. Inf. xviii. 29;—Purg. ii.
 98; Par. xxxi. 31, 103.
Judas¹ Iscariot. Inf. ix. 27; xxxi.
 143; xxxiv. 62; Purg. xx. 74; xxi.
 84;—Inf. xix. 96.
Judas² Maccabaeus. Par. xviii.
 40.
Jude, St. Purg. xxix. 142.
Judecca. Inf. xxxiv. 117;—ix. 27.
Judge, The. [Nino.]

- Judicial Spirits.]** Par. xviii. 52-xx.
Judith. Par. xxxii. 10.
Julia. Inf. iv. 128.
Julius. Inf. i. 70. [Caesar.]
July. Inf. xxix. 47.
Juno. Inf. xxx. 1; Par. xii. 12; xxviii. 32.
Juno, Handmaid of. [Iris.]
Juno, Messenger of. [Iris.]
Jupiter, Heaven of.] Par. xviii. 52-xx. 148.
Jupiter, planet. Par. xviii. 95; xxii. 145; xxvii. 14;—xviii. 68, 70, 115; xx. 17.
Justinian. Purg. vi. 89; Par. vi. 10.
Juvenal. Purg. xxii. 14.
L. Par. xviii. 78.
Lacedaemon. Purg. vi. 139.
Lachesis. Purg. xxv. 79;—xxi. 25.
Ladies, Four. Purg. xxix. 130-2; xxxi. 104-17; xxxii. 25, 98; xxxiii. 2, 3, 7, 11, 13, 109.
Ladies, Three. Purg. xxix. 121-9; xxxi. 131-8; xxxii. 25, 98; xxxiii. 2, 3, 7, 11, 13, 109.
Laertes.] Inf. xxvi. 95.
Lago di Garda. [Benaco.]
Lambertaccio Fabbro.] Purg. xiv. 100.
Lamberti.] Par. xvi. 110.
Lamberti, Mosca de². [Mosca.]
Lamone. Inf. xxvii. 49. [Faenza.]
Lancelot. Inf. v. 128;—Inf. v. 134.
Lanfranchi. Inf. xxxiii. 32.
Langia. Purg. xxii. 112.
Lano. Inf. xiii. 120.
Lapi. Par. xxix. 103.
Lapo Salterello. Par. xv. 128.
Lateran. Inf. xxvii. 86; Par. xxxi. 35.
Latin, Italian. Inf. xxii. 65; xxvii. 27, 33; xxviii. 71; xxix. 88, 91; Purg. xi. 58; xiii. 92.
Latin country. Inf. xxvii. 27; xxviii. 71. [Italy.]
Latin language. Par. x. 120; xii. 144; xvii. 35.
Latino, Brunetto. [Brunetto.]
Latins, the ancient Romans. Purg. vii. 16.
Latinus. Inf. iv. 125.
Latona. Purg. xx. 131; Par. x. 67; xxii. 139; xxix. 1.
Latona, Daughter of. [Diana¹.]
Latona, Son of. [Apollo.]
Lavagna.] Purg. xix. 101.
La Verna. Par. xi. 106, 107.
Lavinia. Inf. iv. 126. Purg. xvii. 37; Par. vi. 3.
Lawrence, St. Par. iv. 83.
Lazarus.] Purg. xxxii. 78.
Leah. Purg. xxvii. 101.
Leander. Purg. xxviii. 73.
Learchus. Inf. xxx. 10.
Lebanon. Purg. xxx. 11.
Leda. Par. xxvii. 98.
Lemnos. Inf. xviii. 88.
Lentino, Jacopo da. [Notary, The.]
Leo, San. [San Leo.]
Leo, constellation. Par. xvi. 37; xxi. 14.
Lerici. Purg. iii. 49.
Lerida. Purg. xviii. 101.
Lethe. Inf. xiv. 131, 136; Purg. xxvi. 108; xxviii. 130; xxx. 143; xxxiii. 96, 123;—Inf. xxxiv. 130; Purg. i. 40; xxviii. 25, 62, 85; xxix. 7, 67, 71, 141; xxx. 76; xxxi. 1, 12, 82, 94, 96; xxxiii. 113.
Levi. Purg. xvi. 132.
Levites.] Purg. xvi. 132.
Liber Sententiarum], of Peter Lombard. Par. x. 108.
Libicocco. Inf. xxi. 121; xxii. 70.
Libra. Purg. xxvii. 3; Par. xxix. 2; Balance. Purg. ii. 5.
Libya. Purg. xxxi. 72; Inf. xxiv. 85.
Liguria.] Purg. iii. 49.
Lille. Purg. xx. 46.
Limbo, of Hell. Inf. iv. 45; Purg. xxii. 14;—Inf. iv. 24; Purg. vii. 28; xxi. 31; xxii. 103; xxx. 139; Par. xxxii. 84.
Limoges. Purg. xxvi. 120.
Linus¹, Christian martyr. Par. xxvii. 41.
Linus², mythical Greek poet. Inf. iv. 141 (v. l. Livio).
Livy. Inf. xxviii. 12;—Inf. iv. 141.
Lizio. Purg. xiv. 97.
Loderingo. Inf. xxxiii. 104.
Logodoro. Inf. xxii. 89.
Loire. Par. vi. 59.
Lombard, The great. Par. xvii. 71. [Bartolommeo della Scala.]
Lombard, The loyal. Purg. xvi. 126. [Guido da Castel.]
Lombard soul. Purg. vi. 61. [Sordello.]
Lombardi. Purg. xvi. 46.

- Lombardo, Marco.** [Marco Lombardo.]
Lombardo, Pietro. [Peter².]
Lombards. Inf. i. 68; xxii. 99; xxvii. 20; Purg. vi. 61; xvi. 46, 126; Par. vi. 94; xvii. 71.
Lombardy.] Inf. xxvii. 74; Purg. xvi. 115.
London.] Inf. xii. 120.
Lotto degli Agli.] Inf. xiii. 123-124.
Louis, name of French kings. Purg. xx. 50.
Louis IX, King of France. Purg. vii. 128.
Louis of Sicily, second son of Charles II of Anjou and Naples.] Par. viii. 146.
Lucan. Inf. iv. 90; xxv. 94.
Lucca. Inf. xviii. 122; xxxiii. 30; Purg. xxiv. 20, 35;—Inf. xxi. 38; Purg. xxiv. 45.
Lucifer. Inf. xxxi. 143; xxxiv. 89; Dis. Inf. xi. 65; xii. 39; xxxiv. 20; Beelzebub. Inf. xxxiv. 127; Devil. Inf. xxiii. 143; Satan. Inf. vii. 1; King of Hell. Inf. xxxiv. 1;—Inf. vi. 96; xxxiv. 28, 108; Purg. xii. 25; Par. ix. 127; xix. 47; xxvii. 26; xxix. 56.
Lucretia. Inf. iv. 128; Par. vi. 41.
Lucy, St. Inf. ii. 97, 100; Purg. ix. 55; Par. xxxii. 137;—Purg. ix. 59, 63.
Luke, Evangelist. Purg. xxi. 7;—xxix. 92, 134, 136.
Luni. Inf. xx. 47; Par. xvi. 73.
Lunigiana.] Purg. viii. 121, 125.
Lustful.] Inf. v; Purg. xxv. 109-xxvii. 57.
Lycurgus. Purg. xxvi. 94.

M¹, letter. Par. xviii. 94, 98.
M², cypher; emme. Par. xix. 129.
Macarius. Par. xxii. 49.
Maccabees. Inf. xix. 86.
Maccabaeus. Par. xviii. 40.
Macra. Par. ix. 89.
Macra, Val di. [Val di Magra.]
Maghinardi. [Mainardi.]
Maghinardo Pagano. [Mainardo.]
Magpies. Purg. i. 11.
Magra, Val di. [Val di Magra.]
Magus, Simon. Inf. xix. 1; Par. xxx. 147.
Maia. Par. xxii. 144. [Mercury².]
Mainardi, Henry. Purg. xiv. 97.
- Mainardo, Pagano.]** Inf. xxvii. 50; Purg. xiv. 118. [Demon, The.]
Majorca. Inf. xxviii. 82.
Malacoda. Inf. xxi. 76, 79;—xxi. 85, 103, 105-26; xxiii. 141.
Malaspina, Conrad¹.] Purg. viii. 119.
Malaspina, Conrad². Purg. viii. 65, 118.
Malaspina, Moroello.] Inf. xxiv. 145.
Malaspinì.] Purg. viii. 125.
Malatesta, Giancesotto.] Inf. v. 107.
Malatesta, Paolo.] Inf. v. 74, 79, 80, 101, 104.
Malatesta da Verrucchio.] Inf. xxvii. 46.
Malatestino.] Inf. xxvii. 46; xxviii. 81, 85.
Malavicini], Counts of Bagnacavallo. Purg. xiv. 115.
Malebolge. Inf. xviii. 1; xxi. 5; xxiv. 37; xxix. 41;—xviii. 1-19.
Malebranche. Inf. xxi. 37; (xxii. 100); xxiii. 23; xxxiii. 142.
Malehaut, Lady of.] Par. xvi. 14.
Malta. Par. ix. 54.
Manardi. [Mainardi.]
Manfred. Purg. iii. 112;—Purg. iii. 103, 106-8, 110, 112-145; iv. 14.
Manfredi, Alberigo de'. [Alberigo, Fra.]
Manfredi, Tribaldello de'. [Tribaldello.]
Mangiadore, Pietro. Par. xii. 134.
Mangona, Counts of.] Inf. xxxii. 55-7.
Manto. Inf. xx. 55; daughter of Tiresias. Purg. xxii. 113;—Inf. xx. 82, 92.
Mantua. Inf. xx. 93; Purg. vi. 72; xviii. 83;—Inf. xx. 56, 91, 98.
Mantuan soul. Inf. ii. 58. [Virgil.]
Mantuan. Inf. i. 69; ii. 58; Purg. vi. 74 [Virgil]; vii. 86 [Sordello]; xviii. 83.
Marcabo. Inf. xxviii. 75.
Marcellus. Purg. vi. 125.
March of Ancona.] Purg. v. 68, 69.
March of Triviso.] Purg. xvi. 115; Par. ix. 25, 43.

- Marchese de' Rigogliosi.** Purg. xxiv. 31.
- Marcia.** Inf. iv. 128; Purg. i. 79, 85.
- Marcus, Ancus.]** Par. vi. 41.
- Marco Lombardo.** Purg. xvi. 46, 130;—Purg. xvi. 25-8, 31, 34-6, 46-51, 64-129, 136-45.
- Maremma.** Inf. xxv. 19; xxix. 48; Purg. v. 134;—Inf. xiii. 9.
- Margaret¹,** wife of Louis IX of France. Purg. vii. 128.
- Maria di Brabante.]** Purg. vi. 23.
- Maria in Porto fuori, Santa.]** Par. xxi. 122, 123.
- Mark, Evangelist.]** Purg. xxix. 92.
- Marquis, The¹.** Azzo VIII of Este. Inf. xviii. 56. [**Azzo.**]
- Marquis, The²,** de' Rigogliosi. Purg. xxiv. 31.
- Marquis William, of Monferrato.** Purg. vii. 134. [**William.**]
- Mars¹,** deity. Inf. xxiv. 145; xxxi. 51; Purg. xii. 31; Par. iv. 63; viii. 132; xvi. 47;—Inf. xiii. 144; Par. xvi. 145; xxii. 146.
- Mars²,** planet. Purg. ii. 14; Par. xiv. 101; xxvii. 14;—Par. xiv. 86; xvi. 38; xvii. 77; xviii. 28; xxii. 146.
- Mars, Heaven of.]** Par. xiv. 85-—xviii. 51.
- Marseilles.** Purg. xviii. 102;—Par. ix. 91-3.
- Marsilia, Folco di.** [**Folco.**]
- Marsyas.** Par. i. 20.
- Martel, Charles.** [**Charles.**]
- Martin],** Pope Martin IV. Purg. xxiv. 20-2.
- Martino Bottaiolo.]** Inf. xxi. 38.
- Mary of Brabant.** Purg. vi. 23.
- Mary¹, the Virgin.** Purg. iii. 39; v. 101; viii. 37; x. 50; xiii. 50; xviii. 100; xx. 19; xxii. 142; xxxiii. 6; Par. iii. 122; iv. 30; xi. 71; xiii. 84; xiv. 36; xv. 133; xxiii. 111, 126, 137; xxxii. 4, 95, 107, 113; **Augusta.** Par. xxxii. 119; **Lady of Heaven.** Par. xxiii. 106; xxxii. 29; **Our Lady.** Par. xxi. 123; **Queen.** Par. xxxi. 116; xxxii. 104; xxxiii. 34. **Queen of Heaven.** Par. xxiii. 128; xxxi. 100; **Regina.** Purg. vii. 82; **Rose.** Par. xxiii. 73, 88; **Virgin Mother.** Par. xxxiii. 1;—Inf. ii. 94, 97; Purg. x. 41; xv. 88; xx. 97; xxv. 128; xxvi. 59; xxix. 85; Par. xxxiii. 88, 92, 101, 104, 119; xxv. 128; xxxi. 127, 134; xxxii. 85, 88, 134, 148; xxxiii. 1, 4, 10, 12, 13, 40.
- Mary²,** Hebrew woman. Purg. xxxiii. 30.
- Marzucco.** Purg. vi. 18.
- Mascheroni, Sassol.** Inf. xxxii. 65.
- Master Adam.** Inf. xxx. 61, 104;—xxx. 49-99, 102, 104-8, 112-14, 118-20, 124-9.
- Master, The¹.** Purg. xxxii. 81. [**Christ.**]
- Master, The².** [**Virgil.**]
- Mastiff, new.** Inf. xxvii. 46. [**Malatestino.**]
- Mastiff, old.** Inf. xxvii. 46. [**Malatesta³.**]
- Matilda.** Purg. xxxiii. 119;—xxviii. 40, 43, 47, 55-70, 76-84, 88-144, 148; xxix. 1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 61; xxxi. 92-6, 100-2; xxxii. 28, 82-4, 85-90; xxxiii. 15, 121-3, 130-5.
- Matteo d'Acquasparta.]** Par. xii. 124.
- Matthias.** Inf. xix. 94.
- May.** Purg. xxiv. 146.
- Medea.** Inf. xviii. 96.
- Medici.]** (Par. xvi. 109.)
- Medicina, Pier da.** Inf. xxviii. 73.
- Mediterranean.]** Inf. xiv. 94; xxvi. 100, 105; xxviii. 82; xxx. 19; Par. viii. 63; ix. 82, 88.
- Medusa.** [**Gorgon.**]
- Megaera.** Inf. ix. 46.
- Melchizedek.** Par. viii. 125.
- Meleager.** Purg. xxv. 22.
- Melicertes.]** Inf. xxx. 5, 8.
- Melissus.** Par. xiii. 125.
- Menalippus.** Inf. xxxii. 131.
- Mercury¹,** deity. Par. iv. 63.
- Mercury²,** planet. Par. v. (87), 96, 97, 128; vi. 112, 127; xxii. 144.
- Mercury, Heaven of.]** Par. v. 93-xii. 148.
- Merovingians.]** Purg. xx. 53.
- Messenger of Juno.** [**Iris.**]
- Messer Guido.** [**Guido del Cassero.**]
- Metellus.** Purg. ix. 137.
- Metropolitan, The.** Par. xii. 136. [**Chrysostom.**]
- Michael, archangel.** Inf. vii. 11; Purg. xiii. 51; Par. iv. 47.

- Michael Scot.** Inf. xx. 116;—xx. 115.
Michael Zanche. Inf. xxii. 88; xxxiii. 144.
Michal. Purg. x. 68, 72.
Midas. Purg. xx. 106.
Midian. Purg. xxiv. 126.
Milan. Purg. xviii. 120.
Milanese. Purg. viii. 80.
Militant Spirits.] Par. xiv. 79—xviii. 51.
Milky way. [Galaxy.]
Mincio. Inf. xx. 77.
Minerva. Purg. xxx. 68; Par. ii. 8; Pallas. Purg. xii. 31;—Purg. xv. 97.
Miniato, San.] Purg. xii. 101.
Minos¹, father of Ariadne. Par. xiii. 14.
Minos². Inf. v. 4, 17; xiii. 96; xx. 36; xxvii. 124; xxix. 120; Purg. i. 77;—Inf. v. 9—21; xxvii. 124—9.
Minotaur. Inf. xii. 25;—xii. 12, 19.
Mira, La. Purg. v. 79.
Mite ('Tesoro'). The *Liber Sententiarum* of Peter Lombard. Par. x. 108.
Mobile, Primum. [Heaven, Crystalline.]
Modena. Par. vi. 75.
Mohammed. Inf. xxviii. 31, 62;—Inf. xxviii. 55—63.
Mohammedans. Par. xv. 143, 145. [Saracens.]
Moldau. Purg. vii. 99.
Monaldi. Purg. vi. 107.
Mongibello. Inf. xiv. 56. [Aetna.]
Mont' Aperti. Inf. xxxii. 81;—x. 85.
Montagna. Inf. xxvii. 47.
Montagues. Purg. vi. 106.
Monte Aventino. Inf. xxv. 26.
Monte Cassino. [Cassino.]
Monte Subasio. [Subasio.]
Monte Viso. Inf. xvi. 95.
Montefeltrano, Guido. [Guido Montefeltrano.]
Montefeltro. Purg. v. 88;—Inf. i. 105; xxvii. 29—30.
Montefeltro, Buonconte da. [Buonconte.]
Montefeltro, Guido da. [Guido Montefeltrano.]
Montemalo. Par. xv. 109.
Montemurlo. Par. xvi. 64.
Montereggione. Inf. xxxi. 41.
Montferrat. Purg. vii. 136.
Montfort, Guy de.] Inf. xii. 118, 119.
Montone, river. Inf. xvi. 99.
Moon. Inf. vii. 64; xv. 19; xx. 127; xxvi. 131; xxix. 10; xxxiii. 26; Purg. x. 14; xviii. 76; xix. 2; xxviii. 33; xxix. 53; Par. i. 115; xvi. 82; xxvii. 132; xxviii. 20; xxix. 97; **Cain and the thorns.** Inf. xx. 126; **daughter of Latona.** Par. x. 67; xxii. 139; xxix. 1; **Delia.** Purg. xxix. 78; **everlasting pearl.** Par. ii. 34; **eye of Heaven.** Purg. xx. 132; **Heaven of the Moon.** Inf. ii. 78; Par. ii. 25—v. 87. **Lady reigning here** (Proserpine). Inf. x. 80; **prime star.** Par. ii. 30; **sister of the Sun.** Purg. xxiii. 120; **spots in the moon.** Par. ii. 49—148; xxii. 139—41; **Trivia.** Par. xxiii. 26;—Inf. x. 80; Par. ii. 50, 76.
Mordecai. Purg. xvii. 29.
Mordred.] Inf. xxxii. 61.
Morning Star. Purg. xii. 90; Par. xxxii. 108.
Morocco. Inf. xxvi. 104; Purg. iv. 139.
Moroello Malaspina.] Inf. xxiv. 145.
Moronto. Par. xv. 136.
Mosca. Inf. vi. 80; xxviii. 106;—xxviii. 103—8, 110.
Moses. Inf. iv. 57; Purg. xxxii. 80; Par. iv. 29; xxiv. 136; xxvi. 41;—Par. xxxii. 131.
Movers of the Heavens. Par. ii. 127—9.
Mozzi, Andrea de'.] Inf. xv. 112.
Mozzi, Rocco de'.] (Inf. xiii. 143—51.)
Mucius. Par. iv. 84.
Munda.] Par. vi. 71.
Murderers. Inf. xi. 37;—Inf. xii. 102; Par. ii. 9; xii. 7; xviii. 33; **sisters of Polyhymnia.** Par. xxiii. 56; **sacrosant Virgins.** Purg. xxix. 37;—Inf. xxxii. 10; Purg. xxii. 105; Par. xviii. 82; **Calliope.** Purg. i. 9; **Clio.** Purg. xxii. 58; **Polyhymnia.** Par. xxiii. 55; **Urania.** Purg. xxix. 41.
Myrmidons.] Inf. xxix. 64.
Myrrha. Inf. xxx. 38.
Mystic Procession.] Purg. xxix—xxxii.

- Naples.** Purg. iii. 27.
Napoleone degli Alberti.] Inf. xxxii. 21.
Narcissus. Inf. xxx. 128;—Par. iii. 18.
Narcissus, Mirror of, the water. Inf. xxx. 128.
Nasetto. Purg. vii. 103. [**Philip**¹.]
Nasidius. Inf. xxv. 95.
Naso. [Ovid.]
Nathan. Par. xii. 136.
Navarre. Inf. xxii. 48; Par. xix. 143.
Navarre, Ciampolo of. [Ciampolo.]
Navarre, Henry of. [Henry⁵.]
Navarre, Tebaldo of. [Tybalt.]
Navarrese. Inf. xxii. 121. [Ciampolo.]
Nazareth. Par. ix. 137.
Nebuchadnezzar. Par. iv. 14.
Negligent to repent.] Purg. i-viii.
Negri. Inf. xxiv. 143.
Nella. Purg. xxiii. 87.
Nello de' Pannocchieschi.] Purg. v. 135, 136.
Neptune. Inf. xxviii. 83; Par. xxxiii. 96;—Purg. xv. 97.
Neri. [Negri.]
Nerli. Par. xv. 115.
Nessus. Inf. xii. 67, 98; xiii. 1;
Centaur. Inf. xii. 104, 115, 129;—xii. 61, 100.
Nicola Acciaiuoli.] Purg. xii. 105.
Niccolò, de' Bonsignori. Inf. xxix. 127.
Nicholas, St. Purg. xx. 32.
Nicholas III, Pope; son of the bear. Inf. xix. 70;—xix. 31, 36, 46, 47, 52-7, 64, 66-87, 89, 97-105.
Nicosia. Par. xix. 146.
Nile. Inf. xxxiv. 45; Purg. xxiv. 64; Par. vi. 66.
Nimrod. Inf. xxxi. 77; Purg. xii. 34; Par. xxvi. 126;—Inf. xxxi. 46-8, 58-76, 79-81; Purg. xii. 34-6.
Nino, Nino Visconti; Judge Nino. Purg. viii. 53; **the Judge.** Purg. viii. 109;—viii. 47, 50, 52-60, 62, 64-84.
Ninus. Inf. v. 59.
Niobe. Purg. xii. 37.
Nisus. Inf. i. 108.
Noah. Inf. iv. 56; Par. xii. 17.
Nocera. Par. xi. 48.
Nogaret, Guillaume de.] Purg. xx. 90.
Noli. Purg. iv. 25.
Nona, Vanni della.] Inf. xxiv. 139.
Normandy. Purg. xx. 66.
Norway. Par. xix. 139. [**Hakon**.]
Notary, The, Jacopo da Lentino. Purg. xxiv. 56.
Novarese. Inf. xxviii. 59.
Novello, Alessandro.] Par. ix. 52, 53.
Novello, Carlo. [Charles II.]
Novello, Frederick. Purg. vi. 17.
Numidia.] Purg. xxxi. 72; Par. vi. 70.
Nymphs, Seven. Purg. xxxii. 98.
[Ladies, Three, and Four.]
Obizzo da Esti. Inf. xii. 111;—xii. 110-12; (xviii. 56).
Obriachi. [Ubbriachi.]
Ocean.] Par. ix. 84.
Octavian. [Augustus¹.]
Oderisi. Purg. xi. 79;—xi. 74-8, 82-117, 118, 120, 121-6, 133-42; xii. 2, 4.
Oedipus.] Purg. xxxiii. 49.
Olympus. Purg. xxiv. 15.
Omega. Par. xxvi. 17.
Omo. Purg. xxiii. 32.
Onesti, Pietro degli. [Damian, Peter.]
Opizzo. [Obizzo.]
Orbiccianni. [Urbiciani.]
Ordelaaffi.] Inf. xxvii. 45.
Orestes. Purg. xiii. 32.
Oria, Branca d'. [Branca.]
Oriago. Purg. v. 80.
Orlando. Inf. xxxi. 18; Par. xviii. 43.
Ormanni. Par. xvi. 89.
Orosius.] Inf. v. 58; Par. x. 119.
Orpheus. Inf. iv. 140.
Orsini.] Inf. xix. 70, 71.
Orsini, Gaetano. [Nicholas III.]
Orso, Count. Purg. vi. 19.
Ostiense, Henry of Susa. Par. xii. 83.
Ottaviano degli Ubaldini. [Cardinal, The.]
Ottobuono de' Fieschi. [Adrian V.]
Ottocar. Purg. vii. 100.
Ovid. Inf. iv. 90; xxv. 97.

- P**, symbol of *peccato* ('sin'). Purg. ix. 112; xii. 121;—ix. 114; xv. 80; xxii. 3; xxv. 139.
- Pachynus**. Par. viii. 68.
- Padua**. Par. ix. 46.
- Paduans**. Inf. xv. 7; xvii. 70; Purg. v. 75.
- Pagano, Mainardo**.] Inf. xxvii. 50; Purg. xiv. 118. [Demon, The.]
- Pagani**. Purg. xiv. 118.
- Paladin**. Par. xii. 142. [Dominic.]
- Palazzo, Conrad**. Purg. xvi. 124.
- Palermo**. Par. viii. 75.
- Palestine**.] Purg. xviii. 135; Par. ix. 125.
- Palladium**. Inf. xxvi. 63.
- Pallas**¹. Purg. xii. 31. [Minerva.]
- Pallas**², Son of Evander. Par. vi. 36.
- Palmers**.] Purg. xxxiii. 78.
- Pandars**.] [Seducers.]
- Pannochieschi, Nello de'**.] Purg. v. 135, 136.
- Paolo Malatesta**.] Inf. v. 74, 79, 80, 101, 104.
- Paradise**. Purg. i. 99; Par. iii. 89; vii. 38, 87; x. 105; xiv. 38; xv. 36; xviii. 21; xxi. 59; xxiii. 61; xxvii. 2; xxx. 44; xxxi. 52; **Imperial Court**. Par. xxv. 30; **Cloister**. Purg. xv. 57; **Cloister in which Christ is Abbot**. Purg. xxvi. 128; **blessed cloister**. Par. xx. 127; **blessed council**. Purg. xxi. 16; **Court**. Purg. xvi. 41; xxxi. 41; Par. xxi. 74; xxv. 43; xxvi. 16; **Court of Heaven**. Inf. ii. 125; Par. x. 70; **blessed Court**. Par. xxxii. 98; **holy Court**. Par. xxiv. 112; **true Court**. Purg. xxi. 17; **Garden**. Par. xxxi. 97; xxxii. 39; **fair garden**. Par. xxiii. 71; **garden of the eternal Gardener**. Par. xxvi. 64; **realm most holy and just**. Par. xxxii. 117; **happy World**. Par. xxv. 139; **fair world**. Inf. vii. 58; **eternal Palace**. Par. xxi. 8; **wonderful angelic Fane**. Par. xxviii. 53; **realm**. Par. xix. 28; xxxii. 52; **Region of the angels**. Par. xx. 102; **land divine**. Par. xxvi. 11; **(heavenly) Kingdom**. Purg. xi. 7; xxxii. 22; Par. iii. 83; viii. 97; xix. 103; xxiv. 43; xxxi. 117; xxxii. 61; **blessed Kingdom**. Par. i. 23; **Deiform Realm**. Par. ii. 20; **eternal Kingdom**. Purg. xxii. 78; **holy Kingdom**. Par. i. 10; **safe and joyous Kingdom**. Par. xxxi. 25; **true Kingdom**. Par. xxx. 98; **(heavenly) Jerusalem**. Par. xxv. 56; **Rome where Christ is a Roman**. Purg. xxxii. 102; **eternal day**. Purg. xxx. 103; **blithesome being**. Par. xxxi. 112; **sempiternal Spring**. Par. xxviii. 116; **sweet life**. Par. xx. 48; **beatitude**. Par. xxvii. 43.
- Paradise, Earthly**.] Purg. xxviii—xxxiii; xxviii. 118; **lofty garden**. Par. xxvi. 110.
- Paradise, Portal of**. [Portal.]
- Parcitati, Montagna de'**.] Inf. xxvii. 47.
- Paris**¹, City. Purg. xi. 81; xx. 52;—Par. x. 137; xix. 118.
- Paris**², Son of Priam. Inf. v. 67.
- Parma, Cobbler of**. [Asdente.]
- Parmenides**. Par. xiii. 125.
- Parnassus**. Purg. xxii. 65; xxviii. 141; xxxi. 141; Par. i. 16;—Purg. xxii. 104.
- Pasiphaë**. Purg. xxvi. 41;—Inf. xii. 13; Purg. xxvi. 86.
- Pastor, Roman**. Purg. xix. 107. [Pope.]
- Pastor, Supreme**. Par. vi. 17. [Pope.]
- Pastor of Brescia**. Inf. xx. 68.
- Pastor of the Church**. Par. v. 77. [Pope.]
- Pastor of Cosenza**. Purg. iii. 124. [Pignatello, Bartolommeo.]
- Pastor of Trent**. Inf. xx. 68.
- Pastor of Verona**. Inf. xx. 68.
- Patriarch**. Inf. iv. 58 [Abraham]; Par. xi. 121 [Dominic]; Par. xxii. 70 [Jacob].
- Paul, St.** Inf. ii. 32; Par. xviii. 131, 136; **chosen vessel**. Inf. ii. 28; **great Vessel of the Lord**. Par. xxi. 127;—Par. xxiv. 62; xxviii. 138.
- Pazzi, Camicion de'**. Inf. xxxii. 68;—xxxii. 52—69.
- Pazzi, Carlino de'**.] Inf. xxxii. 69.
- Pazzo, Rinier**. Inf. xii. 137.
- Pegasea, Diva**. Par. xviii. 82. [Muses.]
- Peleus**.] Inf. xxxi. 5.
- Pelican**. Par. xxv. 113. [Christ.]

- Pellestrino.** [**Penestrino.**] **Pelorus.** Purg. xiv. 32; Par. viii. 68.
Peneian leaf, the laurel. Par. i. 33.
Penelope. Inf. xxvi. 96.
Penestrino. Inf. xxvii. 102.
Pennino. [**Apennines.**]
Penthesilea. Inf. iv. 124.
Pera, Della. Par. xvi. 126.
Perillus.] Inf. xxvii. 7.
Persians. Par. xix. 112.
Persius. Purg. xxii. 100.
Perugia. Par. vi. 75; xi. 46.
Peruzza, Porta.] Par. xvi. 126.
Peschiera. Inf. xx. 70.
Peter¹, apostle. Inf. i. 134; xviii. 32; xix. 91, 94; xxxi. 59; Purg. ix. 127; xiii. 51; xix. 99; xxi. 54; xxxii. 76; Par. ix. 141; xi. 120; xviii. 131; xxii. 88; xxv. 12; xxxii. 133; **the greater Peter.** Inf. ii. 24; **Cephas.** Par. xxi. 127; **the Fisherman.** Purg. xxii. 63; Par. xviii. 136. **Baron.** Par. xxiv. 115; **apostolic Light.** Par. xxiv. 153; **holy Father.** Par. xxiv. 124; **ancient Father of holy Church.** Par. xxxii. 124; **chief Centurion.** Par. xxiv. 59; **first of the Vicars of Christ.** Par. xxv. 14; **great Man.** Par. xxiv. 34; **he who bears the keys.** Par. xxiii. 139 (cf. Inf. xix. 92, 101; xxvii. 104; Purg. ix. 117, 121; Par. xxiv. 35; xxvii. 49; xxxii. 125);—Par. xxiv. 20-3, 28-32, 34-42, 51-3, 54, 59, 67-9, 79-85, 88-91, 97-9, 103-5, 115, 118-23, 124-7, 153.
Peter², **Peter Lombard.** Par. x. 107;—Par. x. 106.
Peter³, **Peter III of Aragon.** Purg. vii. 125;—vii. 112, 114-16, 125, 129.
Peter Bernardone. Par. xi. 89.
Peter Lombard. [**Peter**².]
Peter Mangiadore. Par. xii. 134.
Peter of Spain. Par. xii. 134, 135.
Peter the Sinner. Par. xxi. 122. [**Damian, Peter.**]
Peter, Pine of St. Inf. xxxi. 59.
Peter's Portal, St., Inf. i. 134.
Peter's, St., Church of St. Peter at Rome. Inf. xviii. 32; xxxi. 59.
Petrapiana. [**Pietrapana.**]
Petrus Comestor. [**Peter Mangiadore.**]
Petrus Lombardus. [**Peter**².]
Pettinagno, Pier. Purg. xiii. 128.
Phaedra.] Par. xvii. 47.
Phaëthon. Inf. xvii. 107; Purg. iv. 72; Par. xxxi. 125;—Purg. xxix. 118-20; Par. xvii. 3.
Phalaris. Inf. xxvii. 7-12.
Pharisees. Inf. xxiii. 116; xxvii. 85.
Pharsalia. Par. vi. 65.
Philip¹, **Philip III of France.** Purg. vii. 103-5, 109.
Philip², **Philip IV of France.** Inf. xix. 87; Purg. vii. 109; xx. 91; Par. xix. 120; (**Giant.**) Purg. xxxii. 152, 155; xxxiii. 45.
Philip Argenti. Inf. viii. 61.
Philippl. Par. vi. 73, 74.
Philips. Kings of France. Purg. xx. 50.
Philomela. Purg. ix. 14, 15.
Philethethon. Inf. xiv. 116, 131;—xii. 47, 75, 101, 117, 121, 125, 128; xiv. 11, 77, 81, 89, 121, 132, 134; xv. 2; xvi. 104; xvii. 118.
Phlegra. Inf. xiv. 58.
Phlegyas. Inf. viii. 19, 24;—viii. 17, 80.
Phoenicia.] Par. xxvii. 83, 84.
Phoenix. Inf. xxiv. 107.
Pholus. Inf. xii. 72.
Photinus. Inf. xi. 9.
Phyllis, Rhodopeian. Par. ix. 100.
Physics, of Aristotle. Inf. xi. 101.
Pia. Purg. v. 133;—v. 132-6.
Piave. Par. ix. 27.
Piccarda. Purg. xxiv. 10; Par. iii. 49; iv. 97, 112;—Par. iii. 34, 37, 42-57, 67-87, 95, 97-123, 124, 125.
Piceno, Campo. Inf. xxiv. 148.
Pier Pettinagno. Purg. xiii. 128.
Pier Traversaro. Purg. xiv. 98.
Pier da Medicina. Inf. xxviii. 73.
Pier de la Brosse. Purg. vi. 22;—vi. 19.
Pier delle Vigne.] Inf. xiii. 32-9, 43, 44, 47, 49, 52, 55-78, 79, 81, 82, 87, 89, 91-108, 109.
Pierides. Purg. i. 11. [**Magpies.**]
Piero, Porta san. [**Porta**⁸.]
Pietola. Purg. xviii. 83.
Pietrapana. Inf. xxxii. 29.
Pietro degli Onesti. [**Damian, Peter.**]
Pigli.] Par. xvi. 103.
Pignatello, Bartolommeo], Cardinal; **Pastor of Cosenza.** Purg. iii. 124.

- Pila, Ubaldin dalla.** Purg. xxiv. 29.
Pilate. Purg. xx. 91.
Pilgrims. Purg. ii. 63; viii. 4; xxiii. 16; xxvii. 110; Par. i. 51; xxxi. 43.
Pillars of Hercules.] Inf. xxvi. 108.
Pinamonte. Inf. xx. 96.
Pine-cone of St. Peter. Inf. xxxi. 59.
Pine-forest of Ravenna. Purg. xxviii. 20.
Pino da Signa.] (Par. xvi. 56.)
Pisa. Inf. xxxiii. 79; Purg. vi. 17; —Inf. xxxiii. 89.
Pisano, Federigo.] (Purg. vi. 17.)
Pisans. Inf. xxxiii. 30; Purg. vi. 17;—Purg. xiv. 53.
Pisces, constellation. Inf. xi. 113; Purg. i. 21; **heavenly carp.** Purg. xxxii. 54;—(Purg. ix. 5.)
Pisistratus. Purg. xv. 101.
Pistola. Inf. xxiv. 126, 143; xxv. 10.
Pistola, Cino da. [Cino.]
Pius, Pope. Par. xxvii. 44.
Plato. Inf. iv. 134; Purg. iii. 43; Par. iv. 24.
Plautus. Purg. xxii. 98.
Pluto. Inf. vi. 115; vii. 2;—vii. 7-9, 15.
Po. Inf. v. 98; xx. 78; Purg. xiv. 92; xvi. 115; Par. vi. 51; xv. 137.
Po, Val di.] Inf. xxviii. 74; Par. xv. 137.
Poema sacro. [Commedia.]
Pola. Inf. ix. 113.
Pole¹, North. Inf. xxvi. 128; Purg. i. 29.
Pole², South. Inf. xxvi. 127; Purg. i. 23; viii. 90.
Pole Star.] Par. xii. 29.
Polenta. Inf. xxvii. 41.
Polenta, Francesca da. [Francesca.]
Polenta, Guido Vecchio da.] Inf. xxvii. 41.
Pollux. Purg. iv. 61. [**Gemini.**]
Polycletus. Purg. x. 32.
Polydorus. Inf. xxx. 18; Purg. xx. 115.
Polyhymnia. Par. xxiii. 56.
Polymnestor. Purg. xx. 115.
Polynices. Inf. xxvi. 54; Purg. xxii. 56.
Polyxena. Inf. xxx. 17.
Pompelius Sextus. Inf. xii. 135; Par. vi. 72.
Pompey the Great. Par. vi. 53.
Ponte Rubaconte, at Florence. Purg. xii. 102.
Ponte Vecchio], at Florence. Inf. xiii. 146; Par. xvi. 146.
Ponte di Benevento. Purg. iii. 128.
Ponte di Castel Sant' Angelo], at Rome. Inf. xviii. 29.
Ponthieu. Purg. xx. 66.
Pope. Inf. vii. 47; xi. 8; Par. ix. 126, 136; **the Bearer of the Keys.** (Cf. Inf. xix. 92, 101; xxvii. 104; Purg. ix. 117, 121; Par. xxiii. 139; xxiv. 35; xxvii. 49; xxxii. 125); **Father.** Inf. xix. 117; **Successor of Peter.** Inf. ii. 24; Purg. xix. 99; **Vicar of Christ.** Purg. xx. 87; Par. xxv. 15; **Vicar of Peter.** Purg. xxi. 54; **Pastor.** Inf. xix. 83; Purg. xvi. 98; Par. xx. 57; **Shepherd of the Church.** Par. v. 77; **supreme Shepherd.** Par. vi. 17; **Pastor at Rome.** Purg. xix. 107; **Priest Supreme.** Inf. xxvii. 70. **Servant of Servants.** Inf. xv. 112; **Husband (of the Church).** Inf. xix. 111 (cf. Purg. xxiv. 22); **Pontiff in the Court Divine.** Par. xxx. 142; **vested with the Great Mantle.** Inf. xix. 69 (cf. Inf. ii. 27).
Popes:
Adrian V.] Purg. xix. 99, 107.
Agapetus. Par. vi. 16.
Anastasius. Inf. xi. 8.
Benedict XI (Inf. i. 101).
Boniface VIII. Inf. xix. 53. [**Boniface.**]
Calixtus I. Par. xxvii. 44.
Celestine V.] Inf. iii. 59, 60; xix. 56; xxvii. 105.
Clement IV. [Clement.]
Clement V. [Clement.]
Cletus. Par. xxvii. 41.
Gregory I. [Gregory.]
Honorius III.] Par. xi. 98.
Innocent III. [Innocent III.]
Innocent IV. [Innocent IV.]
John XXI.] Par. xii. 134.
John XXII.] Par. xxvii. 58.
Linus. Par. xxvii. 41.
Martin IV.] Purg. xxiv. 20-2.
Nicholas III. [Nicholas III.]
Pius I. Par. xxvii. 44.
Sylvester. Inf. xxvii. 94. [**Sylvester¹.**]
Sixtus I. Par. xxvii. 44.
Urban I. Par. xxvii. 44.

- Porciano.]** Purg. xiv. 43.
Porta Peruzza], at Florence. Par. xvi. 125.
Porta san Piero], at Florence. Par. xvi. 94.
Porta Sole, at Perugia. Par. xi. 47.
Portal of Dis.] Inf. viii. 81; ix. 89; xiv. 45.
Portal of Hell.] Inf. iii. 1-11; viii. 125; xiv. 86.
Portal of Paradise.] Inf. i. 134.
Portal of Purgatory.] Purg. iv. 129; ix. 51, 62, 76, 90, 120, 130; x. 1; xxviii. 102.
Portal of St. Peter. Inf. i. 134.
Portinari, Beatrice. [Beatrice¹.]
Portugal. Par. xix. 139. [Dionysius³.]
Potiphar's wife.] Inf. xxx. 97.
Prague. Par. xix. 117.
Prata, Guido da. Purg. xiv. 104.
Prato. Inf. xxvi. 9.
Pratomagno. Purg. v. 116.
Pressa, Della. Par. xvi. 100.
Priam.] Inf. xxx. 15, 114.
Primum Mobile.] [Heaven, Crystalline.]
Priscian. Inf. xv. 109.
Procession, mystic.] Purg. xxix-xxxii.
Procne. Purg. xvii. 19.
Prodigals.] Inf. vii. 22-66; Purg. xix. 70-5, 118-26.
Prophet. [David; Ezekiel; Isaiah.]
Proserpine. Purg. xxviii. 50;—Inf. ix. 44; x. 80.
Proud, The.] Purg. x-xii. 72.
Provençals. Par. vi. 130.
Provence. Purg. vii. 126; xx. 61;—Par. viii. 58, 59.
Provenzan Salvani. Purg. xi. 121;—xi. 109-14, 120, 121-6, 127-42.
Psalmist. [David.]
Psalms. Purg. ii. 48; xxviii. 80; Par. xxiv. 136.
Ptolemy¹, astronomer. Inf. iv. 142.
Ptolemy², king of Egypt. Par. vi. 69.
Puccio the Lame. Inf. xxv. 148;—xxv. 35, 149, 150.
Pulci.] Par. xvi. 127.
Purgatory. Purg. vii. 39; ix. 49; the Mount. Purg. i. 108; ii. 60, 122; iii. 3, 46; iv. 38, 69; v. 86; vi. 48; vii. 4, 65; viii. 57; x. 18; xii. 24, 73; xiii. 3; xiv. 1; xv. 8; xix. 117; xx. 114, 128; xxi. 35, 71; xxii. 123; xxv. 105; xxvii. 74; xxviii. 101; xxx. 74; Par. xv. 93; xvii. 20, 113, 137; xxvi. 139; the sacred Mount. Purg. xix. 38; the holy Mount. Purg. xxviii. 12; the Mountain. Purg. iii. 6, 76; iv. 88; xxi. 42; xxiii. 125; the Second Kingdom. Purg. i. 4.
Purgatory, Portal of. [Portal.]
Pygmalion. Purg. xx. 103.
Pylades.] Purg. xiii. 32.
Pyramus. Purg. xxvii. 38; xxxiii. 69.
Pyrenees.] Par. xix. 144.
Pyrrhus. Inf. xii. 135; Par. vi. 44.
Quarnaro. Inf. ix. 113.
Queen of Heaven. Par. xxiii. 128; xxi. 100. [Mary¹.]
Quintius. Par. vi. 46. [Cincinnatus.]
Quirinus, Romulus. Par. viii. 131.
Rabanus. Par. xii. 139.
Rachel. Inf. ii. 102; iv. 60; Purg. xxvii. 104; Par. xxxii. 8;—Purg. xxvii. 104-8.
Rahab. Par. ix. 116.
Rampino Ranuccio.] Inf. xxiv. 139.
Raphael, archangel.] Par. iv. 48.
Rascia. Par. xix. 140.
Ravenna. Inf. xxvii. 40; Par. vi. 61;—Inf. v. 97; Par. xxi. 123.
Ravignani. Par. xvi. 97.
Raymond Berenger. Par. vi. 134.
Rebecca. Par. xxxii. 10;—xxxii. 69.
Red Sea. Inf. xxiv. 90; Par. vi. 79;—Purg. xviii. 134; Par. xxii. 95.
Rehoboam. Purg. xii. 46.
Reno. Inf. xviii. 61; Purg. xiv. 92.
Renouard. Par. xviii. 46.
Resurrection of Christ.] Purg. xxi. 9; Par. xxiv. 126.
Rex Inferni. Inf. xxxiv. 1. [Lucifer.]
Rhea. Inf. xiv. 100.
Rhine. Par. vi. 58.
Rhipeus. Par. xx. 68;—xx. 100, 118-29, 146-8.
Rhodope. Par. ix. 100.
Rhone. Inf. ix. 112; Par. vi. 60; viii. 59.
Rialto. Par. ix. 26. [Venice.]

- Riccardo da Cammino.**] Par. ix. 49-51.
Richard of St. Victor. Par. x. 131, 132.
Rigogliosi, Marchese de'. Purg. xxiv. 31.
Rimini.] Inf. xxviii. 86.
Rimini, Francesca da. [Francesca.]
Rinaldo degli Scrovigni.] Inf. xvii. 64.
Rinier da Calboli. Purg. xiv. 88.
Rinier da Corneto. Inf. xii. 137.
Rinier Pazzo. Inf. xii. 137.
Riphaean mountains. Purg. xxvi. 43.
Rivers of Hell.] Inf. xiv. 115-20.
Rivers of Purgatory.] Purg. xxviii. 121-7.
Robbers, Violent. Inf. xi. 38; xii. 103-39.
Robert¹], king of France. (Purg. xx. 59.)
Robert²], duke of Calabria. Par. viii. 76-84.
Robert Guiscard. Inf. xxviii. 14; Par. xviii. 48.
Rocco de' Mozzi.] (Inf. xiii. 143-51.)
Roger. [Ruggieri.]
Roland. Inf. xxxi. 18; Par. xviii. 43.
Romagna. Inf. xxvii. 37; xxxiii. 154; Purg. v. 69; xv. 44;—Purg. xiv. 92.
Romagnoles. Inf. xxvii. 28; Purg. xiv. 99.
Roman, figurative. Purg. xxxii. 102. [Rome³.]
Roman Church. [Church.]
Roman emperor. [Emperor¹.]
Roman Pastor. Purg. xix. 107. [Pope.]
Roman women. Purg. xxii. 145.
Romano], castle in Venetia. Par. ix. 28.
Romans¹, ancient. Inf. xv. 77; xxvi. 60; Purg. x. 74; Par. vi. 44; xix. 102.
Romans², Christian. Inf. xviii. 28; Purg. xix. 107.
Rome¹, ancient. Inf. i. 71; ii. 20; Purg. xxi. 89; xxix. 115; Par. vi. 57; xv. 126; xvi. 10; xxvii. 62.
Rome², Christian. Inf. xiv. 105; xxxi. 59; Purg. vi. 112; xvi. 106, 127; xviii. 80; Par. ix. 140; xxiv. 63; xxxi. 34; she who sits on the waters. Inf. xix. 107, 109; Harlot. Purg. xxxii. 149, 160; xxxiii. 44;—Inf. ii. 22; Par. xxvii. 25. [Church.]
Rome³, figurative. Purg. xxxii. 102. [Paradise¹.]
Rome, Emperors of. [Emperors.]
Rome, Seven Kings of. Par. vi. 41.
Romena. Inf. xxx. 73.
Romena, Alessandro da. [Alessandro.]
Romeo. Par. vi. 128, 135;—vi. 126-31.
Romualdus. Par. xxii. 49.
Romulus. [Quirinus.]
Roncesvalle.] Inf. xxxi. 16.
Rose, the celestial rose in which the elect are placed. Par. xxx. 117, 124; xxxi. 1; xxxii. 15, 120;—Par. xxxi. 10, 16, 19; xxxii. 4-45, 109-38.
Rubaconte. Purg. xii. 102.
Rubicante. Inf. xxi. 123; xxii. 40.
Rubicon. Par. vi. 62;—Inf. xxviii. 98.
Rudolph¹, Rodolph I, Emperor. Purg. vii. 94; Par. viii. 72;—Purg. vi. 103.
Rudolph²], Archbishop of Rheims, bastard son of Lothair. (Purg. xx. 54.)
Ruggieri, Archbishop. Inf. xxxiii. 14;—xxxii. 125-32, 133, 136; xxxiii. 8, 15, 17, 28, 77.
Ruggieri degli Ubaldini. [Ruggieri, Archbishop.]
Rusticucci, Jacopo. Inf. vi. 80; xvi. 44;—xvi. 4-12, 15, 19, 21, 28-45, 64-72, 77-85, 89.
Ruth.] Par. xxxii. 10.
Sabellius. Par. xiii. 127.
Sabellus. Inf. xxv. 95.
Sabines. Par. vi. 40.
Sacchetti. Par. xvi. 104.
Sacristy, of St. James at Pistoia. Inf. xxiv. 138.
Sadducees.] Purg. xix. 137.
Sage, The. Inf. i. 89; x. 128; Purg. xxvii. 69. [Virgil.]
Saints. Purg. xiii. 51; Par. xxxi. 135.
Saladin. Inf. iv. 129.
Salimbeni, Niccolò de'. Inf. xxix. 127.
Salse. Inf. xviii. 51.

- Salterello, Lapo. Par. xv. 128.
 Salvani, Provenzan. [Provenzan Salvani.]
 Samaritan. Purg. xxi. 3.
 Samuel. Par. iv. 29.
 San Leo. Purg. iv. 25.
 San Miniato.] Purg. xii. 101.
 Sannella, Della. Par. xvi. 92.
 Sant' Andrea, Giacomo da. Inf. xiii. 133.
 Sant' Antonio. Par. xxix. 124.
 Santa Zita. Inf. xxi. 38.
 Santafiore. Purg. vi. 111.
 Santafiore, Counts of.] Purg. vi. 111; xi. 58-69.
 Santerno. Inf. xxvii. 49. [Imola.]
 Saone. Par. vi. 59.
 Sapia. Purg. xiii. 109;—xiii. 100-2, 103-5, 106-32, 139, 140, 145-54.
 Sapiient Spirits.] Par. x-xiv. 78.
 Sapphira. Purg. xx. 109.
 Saracens. Inf. xxvii. 87; Purg. xxiii. 103.
 Sarah. Par. xxxii. 10.
 Sardanapalus. Par. xv. 107.
 Sardinia. Inf. xxii. 89; xxvi. 104; xxix. 48; Purg. xviii. 81; xxiii. 94;—Inf. xxii. 67; xxvi. 104.
 Sassol Mascheroni. Inf. xxxii. 65.
 Satan. Inf. vii. 1. [Lucifer¹.]
 Satirist. Inf. iv. 89. [Horace.]
 Saturn¹, king of Crete. Inf. xiv. 96; Par. xxi. 26;—Par. xxii. 146.
 Saturn², planet. Purg. xix. 3;—Par. xxi. 13, 25; xxii. 146.
 Saturn, Heaven of.] Par. xxi-xxii. 96.
 Saul. Purg. xii. 40.
 Savena. Inf. xviii. 61.
 Savio. Inf. xxvii. 52. [Cesena.]
 Scaevola. [Mucius.]
 Scala, Alberto della. Purg. xviii. 121.
 Scala, Albuino della.] (Par. xvii. 71.)
 Scala, Bartolommeo della.] (Par. xvii. 71.)
 Scala, Can Grande della. [Can Grande.]
 Scala, Giuseppe della.] Purg. xviii. 124.
 Scandal mongers. [Schismatics.]
 Scarmiglione. Inf. xxi. 105.
 Schicchi, Gianni. Inf. xxx. 32;—xxx. 25, 28, 42-5, 46, 47.
 Schismatics.] Inf. xxviii-xxix. 36.
 Scipio. Inf. xxxi. 116; Par. vi. 53; xxvii. 61; Africanus. Purg. xxix. 116.
 Scirocco. Purg. xxviii. 21.
 Scornigliani, Farinata degli.] Purg. vi. 17.
 Scornigliani, Marzucco degli.] Purg. vi. 18.
 Scorpio, constellation. Purg. xxv. 3;—ix. 5; xviii. 79.
 Scots. Par. xix. 122.
 Scot, Michael. Inf. xx. 116.
 Scrovigni, Rinaldo degli.] Inf. xvii. 64.
 Scyros. Purg. ix. 37.
 Seducers.] Inf. xviii. 22-99.
 Seine. Par. vi. 59; xix. 118.
 Semele. Inf. xxx. 2; Par. xxi. 6.
 Semifontè. Par. xvi. 62.
 Semiramis. Inf. v. 58.
 Seneca. Inf. iv. 141.
 Sennacherib. Purg. xii. 53.
 Sententiarum, Liber. Par. x. 108.
 Ser Branca d'Oria. Inf. xxxiii. 137. [Branca.]
 Ser Brunetto. Inf. xv. 30, 101. [Brunetto.]
 Seraphim. Par. iv. 28; viii. 27; xxi. 92; xxviii. 99;—ix. 77; xxviii. 72.
 Serchio. Inf. xxi. 49.
 Sestos. Purg. xxviii. 74.
 Sestri. Purg. xix. 100.
 Setta. [Ceuta.]
 Seven Candlesticks. Purg. xxix. 50; seven trees of gold. Purg. xxix. 43; fair array. Purg. xxix. 52. ensigns. Purg. xxix. 154;
 Septentrion. Purg. xxx. 1;
 seven flames. Purg. xxxii. 18.
 Seven Kings, at siege of Thebes. Inf. xiv. 68.
 Seven Kings, of Rome. Par. vi. 41.
 Seville. Inf. xx. 126; xxvi. 110.
 Sextus. [Pompey.]
 Shadow of the Earth. Par. ix. 118; xxx. 3.
 She-bear, Son of the. [Nicholas.]
 Shinar. Purg. xii. 36.
 Sibyl. Par. xxxiii. 66.
 Sichaeus. Inf. v. 62; Par. ix. 98.
 Sicilian bull [of Perillus]. Inf. xxvii. 7.
 Sicilian Vespers.] Par. viii. 75.

- Sicily.** Inf. xii. 108; Purg. iii. 116;
Trinacria. Par. viii. 67;—Par.
 xix. 131.
Siena. Inf. xxix. 109; Purg. v.
 134; xi. 111, 123, 134;—(Inf.
 xxix. 129.)
Siena, Albero da. Inf. xxix.
 109.
Sieneſe. Inf. xxix. 122, 134;
 Purg. xi. 65; xiii. 106;—Purg.
 xiii. 115, 151.
Siger. Par. x. 136.
Signa's clown. Par. xvi. 56.
[Bonifazio da Signa.]
Silè. Par. ix. 49.
Silvius. Inf. ii. 13.
Simois. Par. vi. 67.
Simon Magus. Inf. xix. 1; Par.
 xxx. 147.
Simoniacs.] Inf. xix.
Simonides. Purg. xxii. 107.
Sinigaglia. Par. xvi. 75.
Sinon. Inf. xxx. 98, 116; the
 Greek. Inf. xxx. 122.
Sion. Purg. iv. 68. [Jerusalem.]
Sirens. Purg. xix. 19; xxxi. 45;
 Par. xii. 8.
Sismondi. Inf. xxxiii. 32.
Sixtus. Par. xxvii. 44.
Sizil. Par. xvi. 108.
Slavonic. Purg. xxx. 87.
Slothful. Inf. vii. 121; Purg. xvii,
 xviii.
Socrates. Inf. iv. 134.
Sodom. Inf. xi. 50; Purg. xxvi.
 40, 79.
Sodomites.] Inf. xv-xvi. 87.
Soldan. Inf. v. 60; xxvii. 90; Par.
 xi. 101.
Soldan, Land of the. Inf. v. 60;
 xxvii. 90. [Egypt.]
Soldanier, Gianni de'. Inf.
 xxxii. 121.
Soldanieri. Inf. xxxii. 121; Par.
 xvi. 93.
Solomon.] Purg. xxx. 10, 17;
 Par. x. 109-14; xiii. 95; xiv. 35.
Solon. Par. viii. 124;—Purg. vi.
 139.
Soothsayers. Inf. xx.
Soractè. Inf. xxvii. 95.
Sordello. Purg. vi. 74; vii. 3, 52;
 viii. 38, 43, 62, 94; ix. 58; the
 Mantuan. Purg. vii. 86.
Sorgue. Par. viii. 59.
Spain. Inf. xxvi. 103; Purg. xviii.
 102; Par. vi. 64; xix. 125;—Par.
 xii. 46.
Spain, Peter of. Par. xii. 134.
 135.
Spaniards. Par. xxix. 101.
Sparta. [Lacedaemon.]
Spendthrifts.] Inf. xi. 40-1; xiii.
 115-29.
Sphinx. Purg. xxxiii. 47.
Spirit, Holy. Purg. xx. 98; Par.
 iii. 53; xi. 98; xiv. 76; xix. 101; xx.
 38; xxi. 128; xxiv. 92, 138; xxvii. 1
 xxix. 41.
Spirit, Laureate of the Holy
 Par. xx. 38. [David.]
Spirit, Scribes of the Holy. Par.
 xxix. 41.
Spirit, Spouse of the Holy
 Purg. xx. 98. [Mary¹.]
Spirit, Vessel of the Holy. Par.
 xxi. 128. [Paul.]
Spirits, Contemplative.] Par.
 xi, xxxii. 99.
Spirits, Judicial.] Par. xviii.
 52-xx.
Spirits, Loving.] Par. viii, ix.
Spirits, Militant.] Par. xiv. 79-
 xviii. 51.
Spirits, Sapient.] Par. x-xiv. 78
Spirits, Working.] Par. v. 85-
 vii.
Spirits who broke their vows.
 Par. ii. 34-v. 84.
Spouse of Christ. [Church
Holy.]
Spouse of God. [Church, Holy.]
Spring. Purg. xxviii. 51, 143
 Par. xxviii. 116; xxx. 63.
Star, Morning. Purg. xii. 90
 Par. xxxii. 108.
Star, Pole.] Par. xii. 29.
Star, Prime. Par. ii. 30. [Moon.]
Star, Sixth. Par. xviii. 68
[Jupiter.]
Stars, Four. Purg. i. 22; viii. 91
Stars, Heaven of the Fixed
Stars. [Heaven, Starry.]
Statius. Purg. xxi. 91; xxii. 25
 xxiv. 119; xxv. 29, 32; xxvii. 47
 xxxii. 29; xxxiii. 134; Sage
 Purg. xxxiii. 8; xxxiii. 15; Leader
 Purg. xxvii. 19;—Purg. xxi. 10
 12-13, 15, 19-21, 40-72, 82-102
 112-14, 119, 120, 130-6; xxi
 25-54, 64-99, 115, 127, 139
 xxv. 31-108; xxvii. 114; xxviii.
 146.
Stephen, St. Purg. xv. 106-14.
Stigmata of St. Francis.] Par.
 xi. 107, 108.

- Straits of Gibraltar.]** Inf. xxvi. 107.
- Street of Straw.** Par. x. 137. [Paris¹.]
- Stricca.** Inf. xxix. 125.
- Strophades.** Inf. xiii. 11.
- Styx.** Inf. vii. 106; ix. 81; xiv. 116;—vii. 110, 118, 119, 121, 124, 127, 129; viii. 10, 12, 16, 30, 53, 54; ix. 64.
- Subasio, Monte.]** Par. xi. 45, 49.
- Sudarium.** [Veronica.]
- Suicides.]** Inf. xiii.
- Summer.** Inf. xvii. 49; xx. 81; xxvii. 51.
- Summulæ Logicales],** of Peter the Spaniard. Par. xii. 135.
- Sun, The.** Inf. 1^a; Purg. 6^e; Par. 4⁷;
- Son of Latona.** Par. xxix. 1;
- Son of Hyperion.** Par. xxii. 142;
- Eye of Heaven.** Purg. xx. 132;
- Planet.** Inf. i. 17; **Mirror.** Purg. iv. 62; **Sweet Light.** Inf. x. 69; Purg. xiii. 16; **Great Light.** Purg. xxxii. 53; **Lamp of the World.** Par. i. 38; **Car of light.** Purg. iv. 59; **great minister of nature.** Par. x. 28; **Father of all mortal life.** Par. xxii. 116; **whose light fills the world.** Inf. xxvi. 26; **who lightens all the world.** Par. xx. 1; **who brings morning and leaves night.** Par. xxvii. 138;—Purg. vi. 56; xxxiii. 120.
- Sun¹,** in the journey of Dante. Inf. i. 38; xxxiv. 96, 105; Purg. i. 107, 122; ii. 1, 56; iii. 16; iv. 16, 56, 119, 138; vii. 85; ix. 44; xii. 74; xiii. 13; xv. 5; xvii. 9; xix. 39; xxiii. 114, 121; xxv. 2; xxvi. 4, 23; xxvii. 5, 61, 66, 68, 133; xxxii. 11; xxxiii. 104; Par. i. 47, 54, 80; xxvii. 86.
- Sun²,** measure of time. Purg. xii. 74; Par. x. 30; a year. Inf. vi. 68; xxix. 105; Purg. xxi. 101; Par. xxvi. 119; a day. Inf. xxxiii. 54.
- Sun³,** figurative. God. Purg. vii. 26; Par. ix. 8; x. 53; xviii. 105; xxv. 54; xxx. 126; the Blessed. Par. x. 76; St. Francis. Par. xi. 50; Virgil. Inf. xi. 91; Beatrice. Par. iii. 1; xxx. 75; the Pope. Purg. xvi. 107; the Emperor. Purg. xvi. 107.
- Sun, Car of the.** Purg. xxix. 117, 118. [Phaëthon.]
- Sun, Eclipse of the.** Par. ii. 80; xxvii. 35; xxix. 97–102.
- Sun, Handmaid of the.** Par. xxx. 7. [Aurora.]
- Sun, Heaven of the.** Par. x.—xiv. 84; x. 41, 49.
- Sun, Horses of the.** Purg. xxxii. 57.
- Susa, Henry of.** [Ostiense.]
- Swabia.** Par. iii. 119, 120.
- Swabia, Second Blast of Emperor Henry VI).** Purg. iii. 119.
- Sylvester¹,** Pope. Inf. xxvii. 94;—Inf. xix. 117; Par. xx. 57.
- Sylvester²,** Franciscan. Par. xi. 83.
- Syrinx.** Purg. xxxiii. 65.
- Tacco, Ghin di.** Purg. vi. 14.
- Tagliacozzo.** Inf. xxviii. 17.
- Tagliamento.** Par. ix. 44.
- Talamone.** Purg. xiii. 152.
- Tambernica.** Inf. xxxii. 28.
- Tarlati, Cione de³.]** Purg. vi. 15.
- Tarpeian hill.** Purg. ix. 137.
- Tarquin.** Inf. iv. 127.
- Tartars.** Inf. xvii. 17.
- Taurus,** constellation. Purg. xxv. 3; Par. xxii. 111;—Purg. xxxii. 57.
- Tegghiaio.** Inf. vi. 79; xvi. 41.
- Telemachus.]** Inf. xxvi. 94.
- Templars.]** Purg. xx. 93.
- Temple, of Jerusalem.** Purg. xv. 87.
- Terence.** Purg. xxii. 97.
- Tesoro de' Beccheria.]** Inf. xxxii. 119.
- Tesoro¹,** of Brunetto Latino. Inf. xv. 119.
- Tesoro²,** the *Liber Sententiarum* of Peter Lombard. Par. x. 108.
- Testament, New.** Par. v. 76; xxiv. 93, 97, 98.
- Testament, Old.** Par. v. 76; Par. xxiv. 93, 97, 98;—Purg. xxix. 83–7; xxx. 7.
- Teucris.** [Trojans.]
- Thaddeus.** Par. xii. 83.
- Thaïs.** Inf. xviii. 133.
- Thales.** Inf. iv. 137.
- Thames.** Inf. xii. 120.
- Thaumas.** Purg. xxi. 50.
- Thebans.** Inf. xx. 32; xxx. 2; Purg. xviii. 93.
- Thebes.** Inf. xiv. 69; xxv. 15; xxx. 22; xxxii. 11; xxxiii. 89; Purg. xxi. 92; xxii. 89; **City of Bacchus.** Inf. xx. 59.

- Thebes, The new.** Inf. xxxiii. 89. [Pisa.]
Themis. Purg. xxxiii. 47.
Theologians.] Par. x. 64-81.
Theseus. Inf. ix. 54; Purg. xxiv. 123; Duke of Athens. Inf. xii. 17.
Thetis. Purg. xxii. 113;—ix. 37.
Thieves.] Inf. xxiv-xxv.
Third Caesar. Par. vi. 86. [Tiberius.]
Third Heaven. Par. viii. 37. [Venus, Heaven of.]
Third Wind of Swabia. Par. iii. 120. [Frederick II.²]
Thisbe. Purg. xxvii. 37.
Thoas, son of Hypsipyle. Purg. xxvi. 95.
Thomas¹, apostle. Par. xvi. 129.
Thomas², of Aquinas. Purg. xx. 69; Par. x. 99; xii. 110, 144; xiv. 6;—Par. x. 82-138; xi. 16-139; xii. 2; xiii. 32-142.
Thrones. Par. ix. 61; xxviii. 104.
Thymbraeus. Purg. xii. 31. [Apollo.]
Tiber. Inf. xxvii. 30; Purg. ii. 101; Par. xi. 106.
Tiberias, Sea of. Par. xxiv. 39.
Tiberius.] Par. vi. 86.
Tignoso, Federico. Purg. xiv. 106.
Tigris. Purg. xxxiii. 112.
Timaeus. Par. iv. 49.
Tiresias. Inf. xx. 40; Purg. xxii. 113.
Tiresias, Daughter of. [Manto.]
Tisiphone. Inf. ix. 48.
Tithonus. Purg. ix. 1.
Tithonus, Concubine of. [Aurora.]
Titus. Purg. xxi. 82; Par. vi. 92.
Tityus. Inf. xxxi. 124.
Tobias. Par. iv. 48.
Tolomei, Pia de'. [Pia.]
Tomyris. Purg. xii. 56.
Toppo. Inf. xiii. 121.
Torquatus. Par. vi. 46.
Tosa, Cianghella della. [Cianghella.]
Tosa, Della. [Tosinghi.]
Tosinghi.] Par. xv. 128; xvi. 112.
Toulouse. Purg. xxi. 89.
Tours. Purg. xxiv. 23.
Tragedia, the Aeneid of Virgil. Inf. xx. 113. [Aeneid.]
Traitors. Inf. xxxii-xxxiv.
Trajan. Purg. x. 76;—x. 74-93; Par. xx. 44, 45, 112-17.
Transfiguration of Christ. Purg. xxxii. 73-81.
Traversara, Casa. Purg. xiv. 107.
Traversaro, Piero. Purg. xiv. 98.
Trent. Inf. xii. 5.
Trent, Pastor of. Inf. xx. 67.
Trespiano. Par. xvi. 54.
Trevisans. Par. ix. 43.
Treviso, March of. Purg. xv. 115; Par. ix. 25, 43.
Tribaldello. Inf. xxxii. 122.
Trinacria. [Sicily.]
Trinity.] Inf. iii. 5, 6; Purg. iii. 36; Par. vii. 30-3; x. 1-3, 51 xiii. 26, 55-7; xxiv. 139; xxxi. 28 xxxiii. 115-19, 124-6.
Tristan. Inf. v. 67.
Trivia. Par. xxiii. 26. [Moon.]
Troad.] Par. vi. 6, 67-8.
Trojan horse.] Inf. xxvi. 59.
Trojans. Inf. xiii. 11; xxvii. 10; xxx. 14, 22; Par. xv. 126; xxvi. 68;—Inf. xxvi. 60; Purg. xvii. 136.
Tronto. Par. viii. 63.
Troy. Inf. i. 74; xxx. 98, 114 Purg. xii. 61; **Ilium.** Inf. i. 79 Purg. xii. 62;—Inf. xxvi. 59; Par. vi. 6, 68.
Tully. [Cicero.]
Tupino. Par. xi. 43.
Turbia. Purg. iii. 49.
Turks. Inf. xvii. 17.
Turnus. Inf. i. 108.
Tuscan¹. Par. ix. 90; xxii. 117.
Tuscan², Dante addressed as. Inf. x. 22; xxiii. 91; xxxii. 66; Par. xi. 58; xiv. 103, 124.
Tuscan people. Inf. xxviii. 108.
Tuscan speech. Inf. xxiii. 7 Purg. xvi. 137.
Tuscans. Inf. xxii. 99.
Tuscany. Inf. xxiv. 122; Par. xi. 110; xiii. 149; xiv. 16.
Tybalt, Tybalt II, King Navarre. Inf. xxii. 52.
Tydeus. Inf. xxxii. 130.
Typhoeus; Typhon. Inf. xx. 124; Par. viii. 70.
Tyrants. Inf. xii. 103-12.
Tyrol. Inf. xx. 63.
Ubaldin dalla Pila. Purg. xx. 29.
Ubalдини, Ottaviano deg [Cardinal, The.]
Ubalдини, Ruggieri deg [Ruggieri, Archbishop.]

- Ubaldo** (St. Ubald). Par. xi. 44.
Ubbriachi.] Inf. xvii. 62, 63.
Uberti.] Par. xvi. 109-10.
Uberti, Farinata degli. [Farinata.]
Ubertin Donato. Par. xvi. 119.
Ubertino da Casale.] Par. xii. 124.
Uccellatoio, ('Bird-snare Hill'). Par. xv. 110.
Ughi. Par. xvi. 88.
Ugolin d'Azzo. Purg. xiv. 105.
Ugolin de' Fantolin. Purg. xiv. 121.
Ugolino, Count. Inf. xxxiii. 13, 85;—xxxii. 125-32; xxxiii. 1-78.
Ugolino della Gherardesca. [Ugolino, Count.]
Uguccione della Faggiuola, perhaps 'the Hound'. Inf. i. 101.
Uguccione della Gherardesca. Inf. xxxiii. 89.
Ulysses. Inf. xxvi. 56; Purg. xix. 22; Par. xxvii. 83;—Inf. xxvi. 52, 53, 55-69, 74-6, 79-142; xxvii. 1.
Urania. Purg. xxix. 41.
Urban. Par. xxvii. 44.
Urbiciani, Bonagiunta degli. [Bonagiunta.]
Urbino. Inf. xxvii. 29.
Urbisaglia. Par. xvi. 73.
Usurers.] Inf. xvii. 44-78.
Utica. Purg. i. 74.
Uzzah.] Purg. x. 57.

Val Camonica. Inf. xx. 65.
Val di Magra. Inf. xxiv. 145; Purg. viii. 116.
Val di Pado. Par. xv. 137.
Valbona, Lizio da. Purg. xiv. 97.
Valdarno.] Purg. xiv. 30, 41.
[Arno.]
Valdichiana. Inf. xxix. 47.
Valdigreve. Par. xvi. 66.
Valdimacra. [Val di Magra.]
Vanni Fucci. [Fucci, Vanni.]
Vanni della Nona.] Inf. xxiv. 139.
Var. Par. vi. 58.
Varius. Purg. xxii. 98. (*v.l.* Varro.)
Varro. Purg. xxii. 98. (*v.l.* Varro.)
Vatican. Par. ix. 139.
Vecchio, Del. Par. xv. 115.
Venedico Caccianimico. Inf. xviii. 50;—xviii. 40, 46, 66.
Venetians. Inf. xxi. 7.
Venice. Par. xix. 141.

Venus¹, goddess. Purg. xxv. 132; xxviii. 65; Par. viii. 10.
Venus², planet. **Cyprian.** Par. viii. 2; **Cytherea.** Purg. xxvii. 95; **Dionè.** Par. xxii. 144;—Purg. i. 19; Par. viii. 11, 13, 19; ix. 33, 110.
Venus, Epicycle of. Par. viii. 3.
Venus, Heaven of. Par. viii. 37;—ix. 38, 118; viii-ix.
Vercelli. Inf. xxviii. 75.
Verde. Purg. iii. 131; Par. viii. 63.
Verona. Inf. xv. 122; Purg. xviii. 118.
Veronica. Par. xxxi. 104.
Verrucchio. Inf. xxvii. 46.
Veso, Monte. Inf. xvi. 95.
Vespers, Sicilian.] Par. viii. 75.
Vicar of Christ. [Pope.]
Vicar of Peter. [Pope.]
Vicenza. Par. ix. 47;—Inf. xv. 113.
Victor, Hugh of St. [Hugh.]
Victor, Richard of St. [Richard.]
Vigne, Pier delle. [Pier delle Vigne.]
Violent, The. Inf. xii-xvii.
Virgil. Inf. i. 79; xix. 61; xxiii. 124; xxix. 4; xxxi. 133; Purg. ii. 61; iii. 74; vi. 67; vii. 7; viii. 64; x. 53; xiii. 79; xix. 28; xxi. 14, 101, 103, 125; xxii. 10; xxiii. 130; xxiv. 119; xxvii. 20, 118, 126; xxix. 56; xxx. 46, 49, 50, 51, 55; Par. xvii. 19; xxvi. 118; **singer of the Bucolic Songs.** Purg. xxii. 57; **the Poet.** Inf. iv. 14; v. 111; ix. 51; xii. 113; xiii. 80; xviii. 20; xxix. 121; Purg. iv. 58, 136; v. 44; x. 101; xiii. 11; xiv. 140; xix. 82; xxii. 115, 139; xxviii. 146; **the loftiest Poet.** Inf. iv. 80; **the ancient Poet.** Inf. x. 122; **the sweet Poet.** Inf. xxvii. 3; **our great Poet.** Par. xv. 26; **glory of the Latin race.** Purg. vii. 16; **Poet.** Inf. i. 130; ii. 10; v. 73; **Teacher.** Inf. v. 70, 123; xvi. 13, 48; Purg. xxi. 22, 131; **kind Teacher.** Purg. xii. 3; **lofty Teacher.** Purg. xviii. 2; **Leader.** Inf. ⁵⁹; Purg. ²⁴; **good Leader.** Inf. x. 19; xii. 83; Purg. vi. 49; **dear Leader.** Inf. viii. 97; **sweet Leader.** Inf. xviii. 44; Purg. vi. 71; **wise Leader.** Inf. iv. 149; Purg. xxi.

76; xxvii. 41; true Leader. Inf. xvi. 62; Master. Inf. ⁶⁰; Purg. ²⁵; good Master. Inf. iv. 31, 85; vii. 115; viii. 67; xiii. 16; xviii. 82; xix. 43; xxi. 58; xxix. 100; Purg. xiii. 37; xix. 34; xxvi. 2; courteous Master. Inf. iii. 121; sweet Master. Purg. x. 47; wise Master. Inf. viii. 86; Father. Purg. xiii. 34; sweet Father. Inf. viii. 110; Purg. iv. 44; xv. 25, 124; xvii. 82; xxiii. 13; xxv. 17; xxvii. 52; sweet dear Father. Purg. xviii. 13; sweetest Father. Purg. xxx. 30; true Father. Purg. xviii. 7; more than Father. Purg. xxiii. 4; Sage. Inf. iv. 110; x. 128; xii. 16; xiii. 47; Purg. xxiii. 8; xxvii. 69; famous Sage. Inf. i. 89; gentle Sage. Inf. vii. 3; Guide. Inf. xii. 54; xiii. 130; xviii. 67; xx. 26; Purg. xix. 53; xxvii. 19; Escort sapient and tried. Purg. xvi. 8; tried Companion. Purg. iii. 4; Lord. Inf. ii. 140; iv. 46; viii. 20, 103, 116; xvi. 55; Purg. vi. 49; vii. 61; ix. 46; xix. 85; sweet Lord. Purg. iv. 109; Comfort. Purg. iii. 22; ix. 43; Succour. Purg. xviii. 130; Counsel sage. Purg. xiii. 75; Magnanimous. Inf. ii. 44; mighty Marshal. Purg. xxiv. 99; Sun. Inf. xi. 91; Light. Purg. vi. 29; Fount. Inf. i. 79; Sea of Wisdom infinite. Inf. viii. 7; high Virtue. Inf. x. 4; eternal Praise (of Mantua). Purg. vii. 18; Mantuan Soul. Inf. ii. 58; gentle Shade. Purg. xviii. 82.
 Virgin¹. [Mary the Virgin.]
 Virgin². [Astraea.]
 Virtues. Par. xxviii. 122.
 Virtues, Cardinal.] Purg. i. 22; viii. 91; xxix. 130-2; xxxi. 104-17.

Virtues, Theological.] Purg. xxix. 121-9; xxxi. 131-8.
 Visconti of Milan.] Purg. viii. 80.
 Visconti di Pisa, Nino. [Nino.]
 Visdomini.] Par. xvi. 112.
 Vitaliano. Inf. xvii. 68.
 Viterbo.] Inf. xii. 119; xiv. 79.
 Vixen, mystic. Purg. xxxii. 118-23.
 Vulcan. Inf. xiv. 57;—xiv. 52.
 Wencelas IV. Purg. vii. 101; him of Bohemia. Par. xix. 125.
 West, The. Inf. xix. 83; xxvi. 113; Purg. ii. 15; xxvi. 5; xxvii. 63; Par. vi. 71.
 Whites, The ['Bianchi']. Inf. vi. 65; xxiv. 150; Par. xvii. 62.
 Whore, mystical. Purg. xxxii. 149-60; harlot. Purg. xxxii. 44.
 William¹, Count of Orange. Par. xviii. 46.
 William², King of Sicily. Par. xx. 62;—xx. 61, 65.
 William³, Marquis of Montferrat. Purg. vii. 134.
 Wrathful, The. Inf. vii. 100- viii. 63; Purg. xv. 85-xvii. 39.
 Xerxes. Purg. xxviii. 71; Par. viii. 124.
 Zama.] Inf. xxxi. 115.
 Zanche, Michael. Inf. xxii. 88; xxxiii. 144.
 Zeno. Inf. iv. 138.
 Zeno, San. Purg. xviii. 118.
 Zephyr. Par. xii. 47.
 Zion. Purg. iv. 68, 75. [Jerusalem.]
 Zita, Santa. Inf. xxi. 38.
 Zodiac. Purg. iv. 64; oblique circle. Par. x. 14.





